

## Psychological adjustment after COVID-19

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### Abstract



*In this paper we conducted the study about the impact and Psychological adjustment before and after the releasing of COVID-19, so as to let people understand the principle behind the panic caused by the epidemic and learn effective response and adjustment methods to help make a better transition. Since China made timely scientific adjustments to the prevention and control of the COVID-19 at the beginning of 2023, many people have fallen into the "COVID-19 Release Anxiety", confused, worried, panicked... The more they think about it, the more difficult it is to control it, the more tired they become. If you have these psychological conditions, your body and mind are giving an alarm: you should face up to your anxiety. We need to know why the epidemic causes anxiety and fear, and what methods we can choose to adjust when we are aware of our excessive anxiety.*

**Keywords:** Psychological adjustment, COVID-19, Anxiety

### Introduction

The impact of the epidemic (COVID-19) is obvious. Some people can't go back to their home before. They haven't returned to their hometown for 2-3 years, and many people's hometown has changed. Some people can't go back to school. They just went to college before the epidemic and will soon become graduates in September. Because of the impact of the epidemic, everyone has their own anxiety and worries. As soon as there is a new epidemic, there will be all kinds of heated discussions and worries.

Inadvertently, people's emotions and psychology were more or less affected by the epidemic. We are used to staying at home and have forgotten the feeling of travel. Online learning, online office, face the computer all day, for a long time, have not been accustomed to face-to-face communication mode. In this long period of more than two years, some people have learned to resolve themselves and release pressure, and have found a study, life and work mode coexisting with the epidemic; And some people are still trapped in it, in a state of entanglement, repetition and melancholy. We should all be alert to a series of psychological and emotional problems caused by the epidemic (COVID-19) syndrome. In a difficult environment, we should try our best to find a suitable way of life, study and work. When necessary, we can turn to relatives, friends, classmates, teachers, and even psychologists for professional help.

The normalization of the epidemic has made our mentality more peaceful. But the three-year epidemic has also had a solid impact on our lives, and our attitudes have also changed accordingly.

### 1. Increased demand for stability

In addition to our lives being affected, work is also affected to varying degrees. The company's performance has also been affected to varying degrees due to the epidemic, and there may be actions such as salary cuts and layoffs. The job opportunities for fresh graduates are becoming increasingly difficult to find, and office workers may one day become unemployed from home. Many impulses and enthusiasm have been worn away in the repeated impact of the epidemic, and the demand for stability is increasing. More and more people are taking the public, editorial, and postgraduate entrance exams. Becoming a stable destination for many people within the system. The heart that once wanted to change jobs and explore has been taken back, only wanting to live a peaceful life.

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## **2. Spread of negative emotions**

According to statistics from the World Health Organization, before the outbreak of the epidemic, it is estimated that one out of every eight people worldwide had mental disorders. After the outbreak of the epidemic, the increase in anxiety and depression disorders exceeded 25%.

Sometimes it takes up to 7 days or even longer for home quarantine. Without exposure to the sun, communication between people decreases, and negative emotions such as anxiety, depression, anger, fear, and irritability are squeezed into the heart for a long time, which can easily lead to collapse over time.

Some people are now very angry and prone to argue with others, even leading to violent incidents. Anger is the squeezing of resentment. Bad emotions accumulate for a long time and cannot be released for a long time, just like a balloon full of gas. Once punctured, it can hurt others and oneself.

## **3. Living in the present coexists with long-term vision**

In the context of the normalization of the epidemic, uncertainty surrounds us. On the one hand, people no longer pursue delayed gratification. They buy what they can afford, and the happiness they can enjoy today will not be delayed until tomorrow. They will live more and more in the present. On the other hand, in the face of unknown uncertainty, people are also paying attention to long-term planning. Because I don't know when I will be quarantined at home, it's impossible to say when I will be laid off. People are also increasingly aware of the importance of hoarding and are beginning to pay attention to saving to resist risks.

## **4. Focus on personal growth and self-care**

Insight into Workplace Mental Health during the 2022 Epidemic found that the epidemic has increased employees' thinking about human nature and life. "Personal growth" is the third major issue for employees seeking psychological assistance during the epidemic. The various changes brought by the epidemic to life will make people start to think about the value and significance of life. They hope to explore their understanding of the world, life, values, and other aspects with counselors, and also hope to exercise and improve their abilities in various aspects to better cope with future life. Against the backdrop of the normalization of the epidemic, we have increased our time spent with ourselves, become more aware of our emotions, and begin to think about the meaning and value of life. Only by feeling emotions, accepting emotions, and taking care of oneself can we cope with the ever-changing nature of life.

In fact, the impact of the three-year pandemic on us is deeper than we imagined. It can be said that this sudden epidemic has brought varying degrees of distress to everyone, changing people's pace of life at different levels, and also changing many people's attitudes towards life. Specifically reflected in the following aspects:

### **1. People are increasingly valuing their physical health**

After three years of living under the epidemic, rounds of lockdowns and endless nucleic acid testing, the people who have been repeatedly ravaged by the epidemic have finally realized the importance of health to people. In any case, compared to everything else, life should always be the top priority in life.

If one loses health, what is the meaning of having even more money and wealth in life? Compared to a healthy body, everything else is a floating cloud. In the past, everything was 'money oriented', but now everything must make way for health.

### **2. The epidemic has led to a significant increase in the number of patients with depression and anxiety**

According to data from the World Health Organization, the current global number of depression patients has reached 350 million. Depression and anxiety have increased by 28% and 26% respectively compared to before the epidemic, and the increase rate is higher in countries with more severe outbreaks.

In a scientific briefing, the World Health Organization pointed out that one explanation for the growth of these two types of diseases is that the social isolation caused by the epidemic has brought unprecedented psychological pressure. Loneliness, fear of virus infection, pain or bereavement for oneself and loved ones, as well as financial concerns, are all considered factors that lead to depression and anxiety.

Not only that, the psychological impact of the epidemic on people will also be long-term. Lu Lin, an academican of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, in the popular science column "Science and Technology Innovation China, Academician Lecture", the speculation about the psychological impact of the COVID-19 epidemic on human beings has attracted widespread attention. He believes that this psychological impact will last for at least 20 years.

In this regard, he came up with a piece of data. Statistics show that since the COVID-19, more than 70 million depression patients, 90 million anxiety patients and hundreds of millions of people have problems such as sleep disorders.

Especially for residents isolated from home, nearly one-third of them may experience depression, anxiety, insomnia, and acute stress reactions. More than 10% of them are still unable to fully return to normal after the epidemic. Regarding this, Lu Lin pointed out that the public should be prepared for long-term psychological preparation, adjust their emotions in a timely manner, and ensure sleep.

Many people have experienced home quarantine for more than 7 days, with no exposure to the sun, reduced communication between people, and long-term suppression of negative emotions such as anxiety, depression, anger, fear, and irritability, which can easily lead to collapse over time.

Under the epidemic, many people have only now truly realized that being idle every day can lead to panic, and being alone is not suitable for everyone.

### **3. The epidemic has changed people's outlook on life and habits**

Many Moonlight and Debt Clans have finally realized that having money in hand was the only way to stay calm, and the way they lived in the past was really dangerous. In the past, many people liked to switch jobs and change jobs at will, so they could look for jobs again when they lost them. Now they finally understand that jobs are difficult to find and money is not easy to earn. They must cherish their current job well.

In the past, when buying groceries, one could eat and buy them at will, which ensured the freshness of the vegetables. This is also true for daily necessities, so one can buy them when they are used up. Now that I don't stock up on some things at home, I always feel uneasy.

The unpredictable epidemic not only disrupts people's pace of life, but also encourages them to view the impermanent world with a more peaceful attitude, able to calmly face many complex changes in life, and dare to face things they previously dared not face. In the past, neighbors who lived next door rarely interacted with each other. They could only greet each other when they met, but now they realize that when they truly encounter difficulties, they have followed the old saying, 'Far relatives are better than near neighbors'.

The long-term lockdown has never made people's desire for freedom so urgent as it is now. I used to feel physically and mentally exhausted from working from nine to five, and I always dreamed of living a 'flat' life. Now that people have been staying at home for a long time, they understand that ordinary life, study, and work are actually a form of happiness. Living freely is more important to people than anything else.

More importantly, the epidemic has prompted people to realize the value of time, understand the principle of "living in the present", and also understand the importance of cherishing the people in front of them. Under the normalization of the epidemic, life is full of uncertainty. People will buy what they can afford now, and enjoy what they can now without delaying it in the future.

At the same time, considering that people will be living under the pandemic for a long time in the future, people are also paying attention to savings to cope with potential risks such as layoffs and illness in their future lives.

### **4. Faced with the epidemic, different people have different attitudes towards life**

Many people refer to these three years as "the three years stolen by the epidemic". Some people turn all their plans into "waiting until the epidemic ends", and even attribute all the unhappiness in life to the epidemic. In short, everything is caused by the epidemic, and it is all the fault of the epidemic. Treating life with this negative attitude will definitely lead to even more unhappiness.

As Inawa Seifu once said, "The thoughts in your heart determine the direction of your life. Because of this, some people, whether in adversity or prosperity, can live a wonderful life and create a world of career. Some people, on the other hand, spend their entire lives complaining and complaining, always doing nothing.

In fact, the problem lies in your attitude towards life and the epidemic, and you will also live in such a state. As the saying goes, your "ideas" determine your "way of life". After the normalization of the epidemic, each and every one of us needs to seriously consider this issue and how we should face the epidemic with a mindset. In fact, 'the way you face the epidemic, the way you will spend your life'.

### **Epilogue**

The three-year epidemic is about to pass, and we will usher in a free life free from quarantine. Having experienced this epidemic is a psychological test for everyone, and it also gives us a deeper understanding and reflection on life and life values. With the epidemic under control, people's mentality will also undergo a fundamental change. May the entire economy and society return to normal as soon as possible!

Now, with the weakening of the pathogenicity of Omicron virus, the popularization of vaccination and the accumulation of prevention and control experience, we have steadily entered the post-epidemic era, and the prevention and control of the epidemic is also facing new situations and new tasks. Among them, the mental health problems caused by the COVID-19 should not be ignored, such as:

People who have not been infected by COVID-19 are confused and dare not go out.

Worried about sequelae after being infected.

Afraid of secondary infection.

Worried about serious symptoms after being infected by the new mutant virus

Pay too much attention to the changes of body and always suspected of being ill?

How to adjust emotional reactions such as anxiety and paranoia?

How to make psychological adjustment after being diagnosed by others or yourself?

After the epidemic is released, physical and mental health is the best reinforcement. We should be the first responsible person for our physical and mental health.

### **Why does the epidemic cause anxiety and fear?**

#### ***Fear caused by unknown epidemic situation***

There is a famous "black box effect" in psychology, that is, people tend to magnify the risks of unknown information and think about the bad things. Ordinary people have limited knowledge of the epidemic and are prone to pay attention to some exaggerated information, wrong information and vague information, which will eventually cause fear reaction; At the same time, people's fear will also infect each other and expand in daily communication. This requires the authoritative department to explain the information about the COVID-19 epidemic openly and transparently. However, if people do not believe or even suspect the published information and believe rumors, they will naturally start to panic and lose their minds.

#### ***Anxiety caused by worry about the disease itself***

COVID-19 has evolved from the first generation of highly pathogenic, transmissible and relatively high case fatality rate virus to the current highly infectious and low pathogenic Omicron. The current COVID-19 severe mortality rate is very low. However, because of the serious epidemic information in the past three years, people always receive negative information about COVID-19, still worried about being spread, worried about illness, fear and anxiety increased. When people feel very scared, they will have rapid heartbeat (panic), shortness of breath, cold hands and feet, muscle tension, sweating, and gastrointestinal discomfort. These reactions are normal. They are the "fight" or run away preparations that the body helps us to cope with threats under stress.

#### ***Fear caused by surrounding environmental conditions***

Under the new situation of the epidemic, the number of positive people around is increasing, and they are afraid of getting positive sooner or later. At the same time, they are also worried about the risk of family members or friends infecting COVID-19; When the surrounding students and friends are diagnosed with COVID-19 infection one by one, they have fever, body pain and other symptoms. Under such environmental pressure for a long time, they feel it is impossible to prevent, which causes anxiety.

#### ***Anxiety caused by isolated at homes***

When COVID-19 is detected as positive, one is afraid that will have a high fever as others say, and will feel pain all over, and is worried about what sequelae he will get, then will be isolated at home and cannot go out. People who have not yet "changed positive" have become confused because many

people around them have "changed positive". They also isolate themselves at home and dare not go out. People need the stimulation of their senses to interact with the world. When they are locked in a closed world with nothing, they feel deprived and easily collapse psychologically. Being in a state of sealing control or self-isolation at home leads to a significant increase in the incidence of anxiety.

### **How to reduce the impact of anxiety and maintain physical and mental health?**

#### ***Accept your anxiety***

Moderate anxiety is a self-protection mechanism and a positive action of our brain against possible crises. Facing the openness of control, we cannot be unprepared. Moderate anxiety reminds us to do personal protection and prepare necessary drugs.

#### ***Shift the focus of attention***

At present, although the COVID-19 epidemic has a great impact on life, it is not the whole of life. On the premise of doing a good job in personal protection, we can shift the focus of attention and take practical actions to deal with anxiety. Exercise moderately and keep regular work and rest; Do something you like, read books, listen to music, do handicrafts, enjoy delicious food, etc; Try new things and give full play to creativity; Write down your anxiety and worry; Imagine the future: what you want to do and a better life after the epidemic is stable or over

#### ***Breath relaxation training***

Breath relaxation training can relax the body from the tense state, so as to restore the emotional stability. It is recommended to try breathing relaxation training twice a day for 5 minutes each time.

- a. Choose a quiet environment (add your favorite light music) and carry out in a comfortable position. You can stand, sit and lie down;
- b. Breathe in through the nose and bulge your stomach; When your mouth exhales and your stomach deflate, you can count your breath as long and gentle as possible by breathing in silently for 3 seconds and breathing out silently for 5 seconds;
- c. Focus all your attention on breathing and counting;
- d. 5 minutes each time.

#### ***Actively seek help***

If depression, anxiety, fear and other negative emotions persist and affect normal learning and life, please seek professional help in time in case of ineffective self-adjustment.

#### ***Reduce the time of mobile screen swiping***

In the new media era, various kinds of information emerge in an endless stream, often leaving people at a loss. Moreover, some information is exaggerated and one-sided in order to attract attention. Such information will increase anxiety and panic during the epidemic. Therefore, we should learn to obtain necessary information from the correct channels, instead of constantly swiping the screen to learn all kinds of gossip. At the same time, for your own health, it is better not to watch TV, computer, mobile phone, etc. all the time, to avoid unnecessary energy consumption caused by excessive access to "junk happiness".

#### ***Try to maintain a regular life***

Do what you can control well, try to keep the same pace of life as usual, and eat three meals a day, sleep, exercise, entertainment, and housework. Don't mess up because of the epidemic. Maintaining regular work and rest and maintaining the stability of life is an important basis for psychological stability.

#### ***Restore the interests and hobbies of the past***

Think about your hobbies? Take time to do things that can calm and make you happy. For example, listening to music, chasing dramas, exercising moderately, chatting with loved ones or focusing on what you think is meaningful.

Keep close communication with relatives and friends

Facing the risks brought by the epidemic, close family ties and social support are important sources of "sense of security". Keep in touch with your relatives and friends at least once a day to understand what your relatives and friends are doing and thinking. When you find that you have similar feelings, you will feel relieved. We should try our best to give more encouragement and care to children and the elderly, and mutual support can help us cope with difficulties more persistently.

### **How to adjust the psychological state?**

#### ***Understand and accept emotional changes***

There are many uncertainties in the current epidemic situation. The unknown pressure will bring worry, anxiety, irritability and other emotions. This is our normal defensive psychological reaction in a dangerous environment. It does not mean that we are fragile or have weak will. We should see our emotions, understand and accept our emotions, and accept changes.

#### ***Try to record mood diary***

Take a little time every day to "smooth out" your mood and write down your bad mood: what is bad and how bad it is... the more detailed the better. There is no need to pay attention to literary grace and composition, just describe the record truthfully. In psychology, "writing down" is equivalent to completing the two most important emotional management processes: identifying emotions and confiding, which can also be called "mood diary" or "self-dialogue".

#### ***Adjust the stable breathing rhythm***

When we feel nervous and anxious, our breath will become shallow and rapid. If we can consciously adjust our breathing rhythm and make our breathing become deep, long and slow, we can help our body and emotions recover to a certain extent. Try to focus on breathing, and do deep and long abdominal breathing several times a day, which will help us reduce stress, improve mood, and enhance attention.

### **Psychological adjustment of patients with COVID-19**

Unfortunately, if we are infected with COVID-19, we may have emotional reactions such as anxiety and tension. So, how should COVID-19 patients conduct psychological adjustment?

#### ***Enhance self-confidence***

Self-confidence is the premise and basis for combating anxiety. Positive and optimistic attitude can increase body immunity. Give yourself and your family encouragement, positive hints, and don't make too many negative fantasies. Accept the isolation situation, understand your reaction, and find positive meaning in adversity.

#### ***Release pressure***

You can communicate with your family on the phone to express any emotion, connect with your family to get support, encouragement and comfort, and release psychological pressure. You can also talk to the medical staff or even try to talk to yourself to find a vent for your emotions and pressure.

#### ***Focus on controllable things***

Unfortunately, COVID-19 infection is something that is difficult for us to control. We might as well focus on things we can control, such as actively cooperating with the hospital for treatment and isolation and protection measures. Learn about the condition from doctors and believe in scientific and medical authoritative information; More nutrition, proper exercise, adequate sleep, and enhanced immunity to better fight the virus.

#### ***Practice relaxation training***

You can listen to music, take a deep breath, practice meditation, etc. to calm down and relax. A peaceful attitude is not only conducive to cardiovascular health, but also helps COVID-19 patients recover quickly from infection.

From the beginning of 2020, the epidemic has affected us for three years. At the beginning of 2023, China renamed "COVID-19" as "COVID-19 infection", people enter the country with a negative nucleic acid for 48 hours, and will not conduct full nucleic acid test; Gradually open overseas travel. We have experienced the strict defense before and the continuous opening up now.

After the implementation of the releasing measures, the economy did not rebound rapidly. On the contrary, the outbreak of the epidemic directly brought the society to a standstill, such as the delay of delivery, the lack of medicines, and the scarcity of subway and restaurant passenger flow. This makes people question the correctness of the liberalization measures.

We should realize that liberalization is inevitable. The economy, people's capability to adapting and the evolution of the epidemic indicate that liberalization is the only option. Anyway, we can only move forward. As the number of infected people across the country reached the peak, the impact of the epidemic gradually declines, although many costs had been paid. But we should also insist on opening up. It is important to improve measures to ensure the life safety of critically ill patients and to ensure that the epidemic is overcome at the minimum cost.

## Conclusion

In the process of entering the post-epidemic era, our work and life will inevitably be impacted. It is human nature to feel anxious, uneasy or worried because of these changes, but we also need to pay attention to positive adjustment and maintain mental health, so as to better cope with changes and make smooth transition. More importantly, we should restore confidence. A great foundation for economic development is good expectations for the future.

We believe that with the gradual reduction of the impact of the epidemic, the economy will gradually recover, and we will also usher in a normal life. The three years epidemic will eventually become a page of history.

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