



City of Salisbury
HUMAN RIGHTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes
May 13, 2021

Committee Members Present

Stephen Feliciano, *Chair*
Reverend John Wright
Ron Pagano
Tyler Anderson
Cinzia Lombardo
Hannah Cechini

Committee Members Absent

Amber Green, *Vice Chair*
Ben Pheasant, *Administrator*
Logan Prushansky
D'Shawn Doughty
Marcel Jagne-Shaw

In Attendance

Laura Baasland
Kerri Lambert, LCSW-C
Jory Pryor

Call to Order

The meeting was officially called to order at 6:05pm by Mr. Feliciano, and the floor was immediately turned over to Mr. Pryor to open the meeting with a meditation. Mr. Pryor briefly introduced himself before leading the group in a short meditation.

Review of Minutes

A motion to accept the minutes from the April meeting with two corrections was put forth by Ms. Lombardo and seconded by Rev Wright; the motion carried by unanimous vote in favor.

Mental Health Awareness Month

Mr. Feliciano gave a presentation on mental health, which covered some basic definitions and concepts. He also explained that the Coronavirus pandemic has been detrimental to the nation's mental health. Mr. Feliciano also highlighted that police violence and racial issues have also negatively affected mental health nationwide. He cited statistics that the nation's youngest population are reporting unprecedented levels of stress. The slideshow that Mr. Feliciano presented to the group has been attached to these minutes as a PDF document. At the conclusion of this presentation, Mr. Feliciano yielded to the evening's guest speaker, Kerri Lambert, LCSW-C.

Kerri Lambert is an EMDR-trained mental health therapist with Chesapeake Health Care. She offers therapy to adults, children, and families, as well as group sessions. Her team includes therapists with a wide variety of trainings, including cognitive behavioral therapy and marriage counseling. The team also has prescribers on staff that can offer medication. Chesapeake Health Care is a nonprofit agency and federally qualified health center that offers medical care, dental care, and mental health care. They also have a pharmacy, work to provide transportation to clients, and have interpreters on staff.

Mr. Feliciano asked Mrs. Lambert what can be done to combat the mental health crisis in our community. She responded that it is vital for individuals to check on one another and be there to genuinely listen and foster dialogue. She cited that 90% of communication is body language, which has been affected by mask wearing. She recommends therapy for those who need it, but Chesapeake Health Care is booked out through July for new intakes, so despite all of the work they do and the varied resources they offer, our Eastern Shore communities continue to be underserved. She stressed the importance of acknowledging and talking about mental health and emphasized the importance of connection.

Ms. Lombardo asked Mrs. Lambert to address the difficulty in making an appointment and being seen, and the low frequency of appointments that are available. Mrs. Lambert responded that it is not appropriate to expect an individual seeking treatment to only meet with their therapist once per month, and stated that Chesapeake Health Care has been open throughout the entire pandemic and continues to see as many patients as possible, but there are just not enough resources. Her personal recommendation is that individuals starting therapy begin treatment on a weekly basis. She described the lack of resources as unfortunate and said that it is sad for individuals who have gathered the courage to seek treatment but who are met with barriers. Chesapeake Health Care is actively seeking licensed health care professionals to hire; the shortage of therapists continues to be a problem.

Mr. Pagano asked Mrs. Lambert if her experience has been that older individuals have handled the isolation of the pandemic better than younger persons, and Mrs. Lambert reported the opposite. She has seen more older individuals struggling with isolation and decline of cognitive function, and she has seen more referrals for older individuals than ever before. Mr. Pagano shared the following links with the group during the meeting for further consideration:

- <https://www.naco.org/resources/featured/american-rescue-plan-act-funding-breakdown>
- <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2020/11/26/938262971/theres-no-stopping-these-seniors-even-a-pandemic-cant-bring-them-down>

Rev Wright asked if Mrs. Lambert would provide him with the name of the therapist she mentioned earlier in the meeting that has a Chase Brexton background; Mrs. Lambert provided the name: Katie Lukehart. Rev Wright also asked Mrs. Lambert to explain EMDR in more detail. Ms. Lambert elaborated that EMDR stands for Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing, and explained that one of the core tenants of EMDR is that our current feelings are associated with past experiences. EMDR is a mind body connection that strives to desensitize negative experiences and memories. Through reprocessing, memories are re-wired to be integrated with a positive cognition and desensitize them.

Jory Pryor stated that he works with the Criminal Justice Reform Task Force and more specifically, is involved with examining mental health calls for service. He stated that there are not many positions that can hope with such calls, and that Mobile Crisis helps some, but is spread too thin. He inquired as to whether or not Chesapeake Health Care may have any capacity to help with that issue, and whether or not increased funding would help. Mrs. Lambert responded that she knows Chesapeake Health Care's director has been in talks with local police agencies and they do want to help. She explained that when a person needs to be admitted to the hospital for a mental health emergency petition, such as due to disclosing thoughts of harm to one's self or others, they essentially have their rights stripped from them and they have to be transported to the hospital by police, which includes being searched and handcuffed. Mr. Pryor and Mrs. Lambert will continue to be in touch with one another to further this discussion with the administrators of Chesapeake Health Care.

Mr. Feliciano asked Mrs. Lambert what the community can do to help address this issue. She responded that family-based activities would be helpful since families are a long-term arrangement whereas therapists are not. She also discussed how the running community has been fostering awareness through the eRace the stigma event, and she mentioned that yoga studios and practitioners are another opportunity.

Ms. Lombardo asked Mrs. Lambert if any particular issue, such as depression or substance abuse, has seen a recent increase. Ms. Lambert responded that there has been a spike across the board and that many patients have cited their issues having been exacerbated by the pandemic. She also stated that the increased awareness of mental health has led to an increase in individuals seeking help, as well as the dialogue around the Black Lives Matter movement.

Mr. Feliciano stated that he is motivated to help those around him and has a desire to do selfless work for his community, but he noted that the work can be difficult and stressful, and he has found that focusing on his mental wellness has been very important. He encouraged the group to take time to care for themselves as they continue to work for others.

Lynching Memorial Marker Ceremony

The unveiling ceremony for the lynching memorial marker is later this month, on Saturday, May 22, 2021. The events will begin at Tidal Health Peninsula Regional hospital and move to downtown in front of the Court House. Representatives from Equal Justice Initiative (EJI) will be present, as well as family members and descendants of the lynching victims.

HRAC Website Updates

Mr. Feliciano asked Mrs. Baasland to ensure that the committee membership on the website is up to date, and she assured him that it has been updated and she will take another look at it.

Human Rights Award

Mr. Pagano suggested that the Human Rights Award be completed prior to Thanksgiving in order to increase community participation. Mr. Anderson suggested that if we do carry forward with the holiday season timeline, we could tie the event in with an existing City event to boost community awareness and excitement. Ms. Cechini added that the news can struggle to find new material and stories during the holiday season, so maintaining that time frame may not be a terrible idea. For those in attendance not familiar with this topic, Mr. Feliciano gave a brief overview of the Human Rights Award program that HRAC is working on. Mr. Feliciano does not want the award to be symbolic, he wants it to be transformative.

Next Meeting and Adjournment

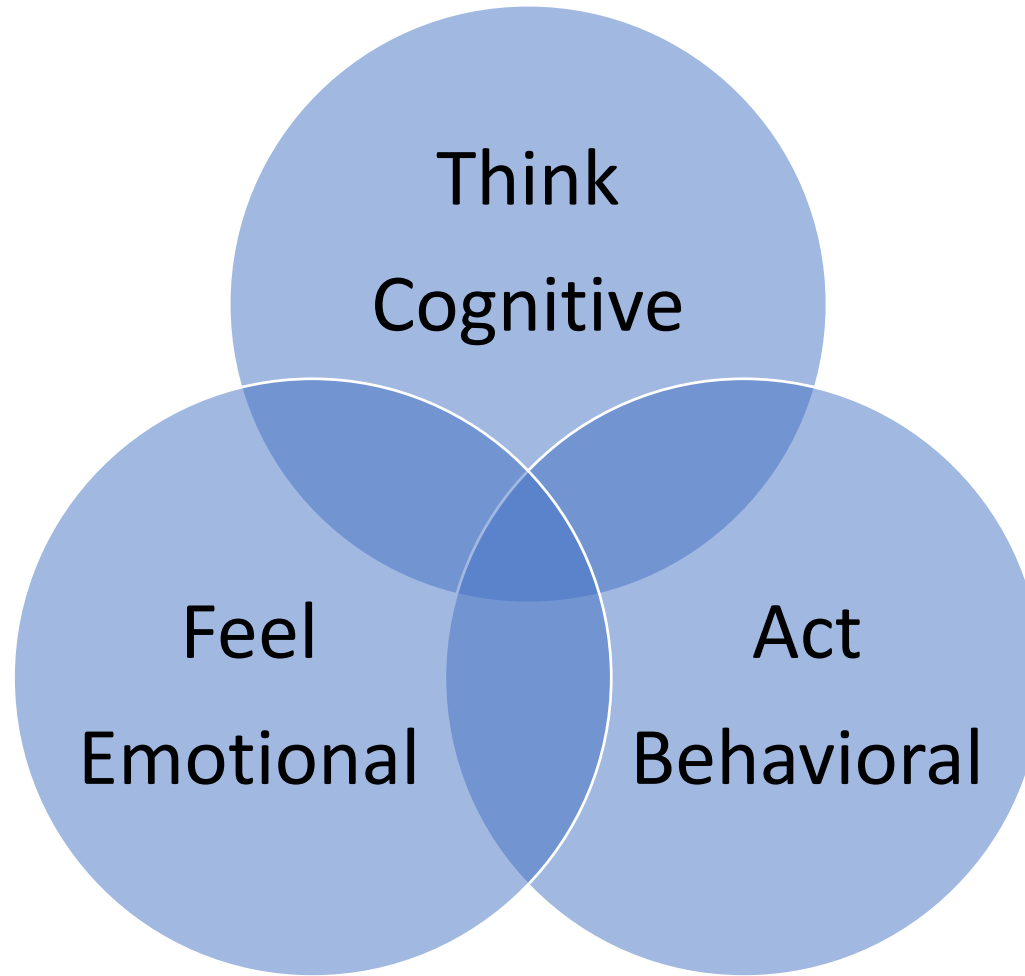
The next HRAC meeting will be held on Thursday the 10th of June, 2021 at 6pm on the virtual platform Zoom. A move to adjourn the meeting was put forth by Mr. Pagano, seconded by Ms. Lombardo, and carried by unanimous vote in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 7:14pm.

Minutes Taken By: Laura R. Baasland, *Department of Water Works Program Specialist*



Mental Health Awareness

Mental Health



Causes of Stress 2020



Sources of Stress in 2020

- Corona Virus
- Future of the Country
- Police Violence
- Disruption to Education

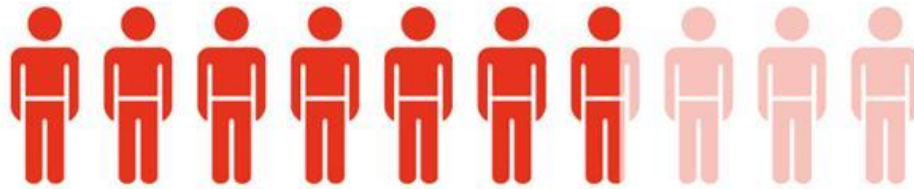
Covid-19

STRESS IN AMERICA 2020: A NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

COVID-19 Is a Significant Stressor for Most Americans



Nearly 8 in 10 (**78%**) say the coronavirus pandemic is a significant source of stress in their life



Nearly 7 in 10 (**67%**) say they have experienced increased stress over the course of the pandemic

STRESS IN AMERICA™

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Country's Future

STRESS IN AMERICA 2020: A NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

Country's Future Is a Significant Source of Stress



FUTURE OF OUR NATION IS A SIGNIFICANT SOURCE OF STRESS

2020



2019



THIS IS THE LOWEST POINT IN OUR NATION'S HISTORY THAT I CAN REMEMBER

% AGREE

2020



2019



STRESS IN AMERICA™

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Police Violence

STRESS IN AMERICA 2020: A NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

Americans More Commonly Report Stress About Police Violence Toward Minorities

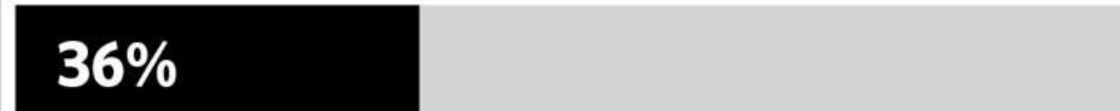


% SIGNIFICANT SOURCE OF STRESS

2020



2016



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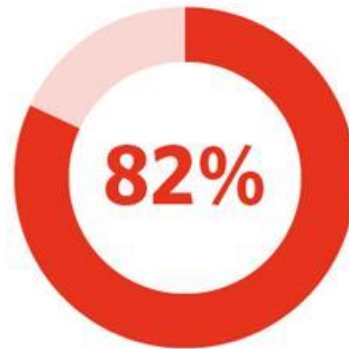
Education

STRESS IN AMERICA 2020: A NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

Disruption to Education Causing Stress for Gen Z Adult College Students



say their **education** is a significant source of stress



say **uncertainty about what the 2020-2021 school year** will be like causes them stress



say the pandemic makes **planning for their future** feel impossible

STRESS IN AMERICA™

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The United Nations

“The COVID-19 crisis has exacerbated the vulnerability of the least protected in society. It is highlighting deep economic and social inequalities and inadequate health and social protection systems that require urgent attention as part of the public health response.”

Mental Wellness Activities

- Plenty of sleep and eat well
- Yoga, walks in nature, stand and stretch regularly
- Take deep and conscious breaths
- Meditation
- Perform a random act of kindness
- Stop and enjoy small aspects of the day
- Engage in some quality time with friends and family
- Listen to music
- Take a moment to laugh

American Psychological Association. (2020, October 20). *Stress in America 2020 survey signals a growing national mental health crisis* [Press release].

<http://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2020/10/stress-mental-health-crisis>

United Nations. (2020, April). *COVID-19 and Human Rights We are all in this together*.

[https://www.un.org/victimsofterrorism/sites/www.un.org.victimsofterrorism/files/un -
_human_rights_and_covid_april_2020.pdf](https://www.un.org/victimsofterrorism/sites/www.un.org.victimsofterrorism/files/un_-_human_rights_and_covid_april_2020.pdf)

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Community Conversations About Mental Health: Information Brief. HHS Publication No. SMA-13-4763. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2013.