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INVITED PAPER

Enhancing Transition Resilience: Using the INSIGHT coaching and counselling model to assist in coping with COVID-19

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Abstract
The novel coronavirus has initiated an unprecedented global transition and this article reflects on the impact of COVID-19 on individuals' wellbeing. It applies the INSIGHT (Palmer & Panchal, 2011a,b) model of transition resilience to offer ideas and strategies that can help promote wellbeing during this challenging time. It also leverages approaches that have been successfully applied in many other transition coaching situations, such as mid-life, becoming a new parent or retirement coaching.

Keywords: *Stress, transition resilience, COVID-19, counselling, coaching, INSIGHT, developmental*

Abstrait
Le nouveau coronavirus a amorcé une transition mondiale sans précédent et cet article se penche sur l'impact du COVID-19 sur le bien-être des individus. Il applique le modèle INSIGHT (Palmer & Panchal, 2011a, b) de résilience à la transition pour proposer des idées et des stratégies qui peuvent aider à promouvoir le bien-être pendant cette période difficile. Il s'appuie également sur des approches qui ont été appliquées avec succès dans de nombreuses autres situations de coaching de transition, telles que la mi-vie, devenir un nouveau parent ou un coaching de retraite.

Mots clés: *Stress, résilience à la transition, COVID-19, counseling, coaching, INSIGHT, développemental*

INTRODUCTION

The novel coronavirus disease 2019, known as 'COVID-19', represents an unprecedented global transition which potentially affects the vast majority of the world population, either directly or indirectly. In April 2020 at the time of writing this article, over 100 countries were in total or partial lockdown. Mowbray (2020) reported an initial 'siege mentality' as communities in China adjusted to the situation. Not only is it a crisis of physical health, it is apparent that COVID-19 is also impacting upon mental health and wellbeing, leading to anger, anxiety, stress, denial, depressive symptoms, insomnia (Qiu, Shen, Zhao, et al., 2020; Torales, O'Higgins, Castaldelli-Maia, & Ventriglio, 2020; Yuan, Liao, Huang et al., 2020). Arguably, this is the first time in generations where

people from across our planet have experienced a rapidly developing global transition at the same time.

The mental health of medical and health care workers working with patients with COVID-19 is also a concern (Kang, Li, Hu, Chen et al., 2020), in particular, those reporting high psychological burden (Lai, Ma, Wang et al., 2020). Can we learn from recent experiences? In the previous Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) outbreak, university hospital workers who treated the patients were at the highest risk for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms (Lee, Kang, Cho et al., 2018). This occurred even after a period of time had elapsed. This could be repeated with the COVID-19 outbreak even if a psychological support system is provided to health professionals. On the practical side, the real or perceived lack of provision of adequate personal protective equipment (PPE) for health workers has raised anxiety levels and also the fear of infecting one's family with COVID-19 (Pearce, 2020).

The general population and health professionals are faced with huge uncertainty, and significant changes to the way they live and work, notwithstanding periods of social distancing, self-isolation and shielding. Whether directly or indirectly affected by COVID-19, the vast majority of people face concerns and ongoing changes in terms of health, work, education, finances, travel, lifestyle and relationships. With social distancing measures in place across much of the world, working and home lives are being transformed in short periods of time. Self-isolation can lead to anxiety and stress and impact upon the sleep and health of workers (Xiao, Zhang, Kong, Li, & Yang, 2020).

Of course, there may also be some positive outcomes of such changes including increased support and admiration for hospital staff and our carers, more consideration of older people within our society, an enhanced sense of community spirit and/or personal resourcefulness and a greater appreciation for our natural world.

MENTAL HEALTH ADVICE AND GUIDANCE FOR GENERAL POPULATION AND HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

The World Health Organization (2020) have published useful notes on mental health and psychosocial considerations during the COVID-19 outbreak. These indicate the different types of messages that can be used in communications for the general population, healthcare workers, team leaders or managers in health facilities, carers of children, older adults, people with underlying health conditions and their carers, and people in isolation.

The British Psychological Society (BPS) (2020a) have also published helpful guidelines on meeting the psychological needs of people recovering from severe coronavirus (COVID-19). They recommend a 'stepped, needs-based, approach to providing psychological care is recommended' (2020:3). In addition, the BPS have published guidance for psychological professionals during the COVID-19 pandemic (BPS, 2020b). It includes guidance on the remote delivery of psychological therapies and interventions.

APPLICATION OF THE INSIGHT MODEL FOR RESILIENCE COACHING AND COUNSELLING

Developmental coaching work over the past decade has highlighted the role of generational, social, cultural and environmental influences on the experiences of life and work transitions (e.g. O'Riordan, Palmer, & Panchal, 2017). COVID-19 is an example of this like no other, a defining force for current generations, which both instigates significant transitions for countless people globally, and also heavily influences existing transitions in people's lives.

INSIGHT© (Palmer & Panchal, 2011a, b) offers a model of transition resilience, grounded in coaching and positive psychology theory, research, techniques and interventions (Panchal, Palmer, & Green, 2019; Panchal, Palmer, & O'Riordan, 2019). The acronym INSIGHT© represents seven areas: Increase self-knowledge; Normalise transitions; Support positive coping; Integrate past, present and future; Give time and space; Highlight broader context; Tailor solutions.

Previously, this model has been discussed in terms of an approach and toolkit for coaches and coaching psychologists who are supporting their coachees through significant life transitions and enabling self-management of future transitions (see Panchal, O'Riordan, & Palmer, 2019; and Panchal, Palmer, & O'Riordan, 2019). The model can also be useful at an individual level, to promote resilience and flourishing during transitional periods. It offers a structure for reflecting on seven key transition strengths, and how to develop these further as necessary using a range of coaching and positive psychology techniques. See Figure 1 for an application of the individual INSIGHT model in the context of COVID-19 transitions.

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Figure 1: An application of the individual INSIGHT model in the context of COVID-19 transitions

Strength description	Potential actions
1. Increasing self-knowledge	
I reflect on my personality, strengths and values during transitions, and use these to guide decisions.	• **Consider your strengths.** Take stock of your strengths (see www.viacharacter.org). Leverage your strengths to boost wellbeing. For example, if creativity is a strength, find some new creative pursuits; if it is social intelligence, find ways to bring people together virtually. • **Work with your personality.** How do you prefer to do things? Are you spontaneous or structured? Prefer time with others or alone? Organise yourself accordingly. Plan routines and social interaction according to your needs.
2. Normalising transitions	
I appreciate that transitions take time, involve a range of emotions, and affect all of us.	• Keep these 'transition truths' in mind: 1. **Transitions take time.** Don't expect too much of yourself and others as you adapt to new circumstances. Recognise small achievements and progress. 2. **Transitions involve emotions.** Accept all the emotions you are feeling - anxiety, fear and sadness. Acknowledge any positive feelings too, such as gratitude and connection. 3. **Transitions affect everyone-.** With COVID-19 transitions in particular, everyone is impacted in some way, and many will be having similar experiences to you.
3. Supporting positive coping	
I draw upon positive coping strategies during transitions	• **Focus on the basics:** Prioritise sleep, diet, relaxation and exercise. • **Engage support and connect:** People may feel isolated and lonely in the changing circumstances. Find people you can openly talk to, and try out new forms of communication. • **Monitor input:** Limit your exposure to the news; rely on credible sources. • **Take control:** The COVID-19 situation is highly uncertain and ever-changing. Try to focus on what you can control rather than what you can't. It may help to focus on one day at a time rather than looking too far into the future. • **Set boundaries:** As home/work/school environments merge, think about boundaries between them. Rules and structures can be useful e.g. I will look at my emails between 7 and 9am. • **Help others:** Volunteering to support others affected by the crisis can help you maintain wellbeing by focusing on others' needs. • **Gratitude:** Try to appreciate what you have, and look for the good in every day.

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4. Integrating past, present and future	
I can make helpful connections between past, present and future during transitions	• **Past:** What skills, ideas and perspectives from your past can be applied in the current situation? How have you handled past transition? • **Future:** How might this situation connect with your future? Perhaps it allows you to strengthen certain relationships, develop new skills, or adapt working practices and career direction. Imagine yourself at a point in the future – how would you like to look back on this time?
5. Giving time and space	
I allow myself time and space to reflect during transitions	• **Find time.** Some will have more time than before, others less. Everyone will benefit from reflection time and space to process their experiences during this challenging period. You could do this alone (e.g. daily journaling), or with others (friend, counsellor, coach). Most companies offer Employee Assistance Programmes (EAP) where you can talk to a trained counsellor confidentially, and at no cost.
6. Highlighting broader context	
I am aware of the broader context during transitions, and understand the influences around me	• **Helpful perspectives.** Ideas connected to the broader context may be useful - 'This is a change that is impacting many people around the world - we are all in this together'; 'We are all required to make changes in order to help not only ourselves but for the greater good. What we do at this time matters' • **Check influences.** Be mindful of influences from family, friends and colleagues at this time. Make decisions and choices that make sense for you.
7. Tailoring action	
I take positive and constructive action steps during transitions	• **Set goals.** Short-term goals can be constructive. These could be weekly or even daily. Take small steps to move forward. • **Recognise achievements.** Acknowledge achievements, however small. Writing these down regularly can help to consolidate them in your mind.

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DISCUSSION

The INSIGHT framework can be shared with the coachee, counselling or consulting client. Currently with the COVID-19 social distancing policies in many countries, the use of virtual platforms for holding meetings with coachees and clients has increased for psychologists, psychotherapists, counsellors, stress management consultants and coaches. The INSIGHT model can be used when coaching or counselling through the medium of these virtual platforms such as Zoom, VSee and Skype, subject to any requirements of local or regional legislation regarding the use of online platforms.

The suitability of telehealth in reducing the mental health burden from COVID-19 in this pandemic situation has been discussed by specialists in the field and is particularly useful with people living in remote locations providing access to services without increasing risk of infection (see Zhou, Snoswell, Harding et al., 2020).

CONCLUSION

The INSIGHT model can tentatively be used as a framework for guiding and informing coaching, counselling and consulting conversations with coachees and clients during the COVID-19 outbreak and post-COVID-19 although in reality, this particular coronavirus may be in the general population for an extended period. ■

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