

Post COVID Recovery – Psychological, Spiritual and Social Considerations

Provincial COVID Rehabilitation Provider Education Sessions

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Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that we are gathered virtually today on the Territories of Treaty 6, Treaty 7, and Treaty 8 and Métis Regions 1, through 6.

These territories are home to many Indigenous Peoples, including the Blackfoot, Cree, Dene, Saulteaux, Ojibwe, Stoney Nakota Sioux, and Tsuut'ina peoples, the Métis Nations of Alberta and the 8 Métis Settlements.

We respect the Treaties that were made on these territories, we acknowledge the harms and mistakes of the past, and we dedicate ourselves to moving forward in partnership with Indigenous communities in a spirit of reconciliation and collaboration.



Thank You

Carmen Lazorek

Dr. Stewart Longman

Debra Samek

Session Overview

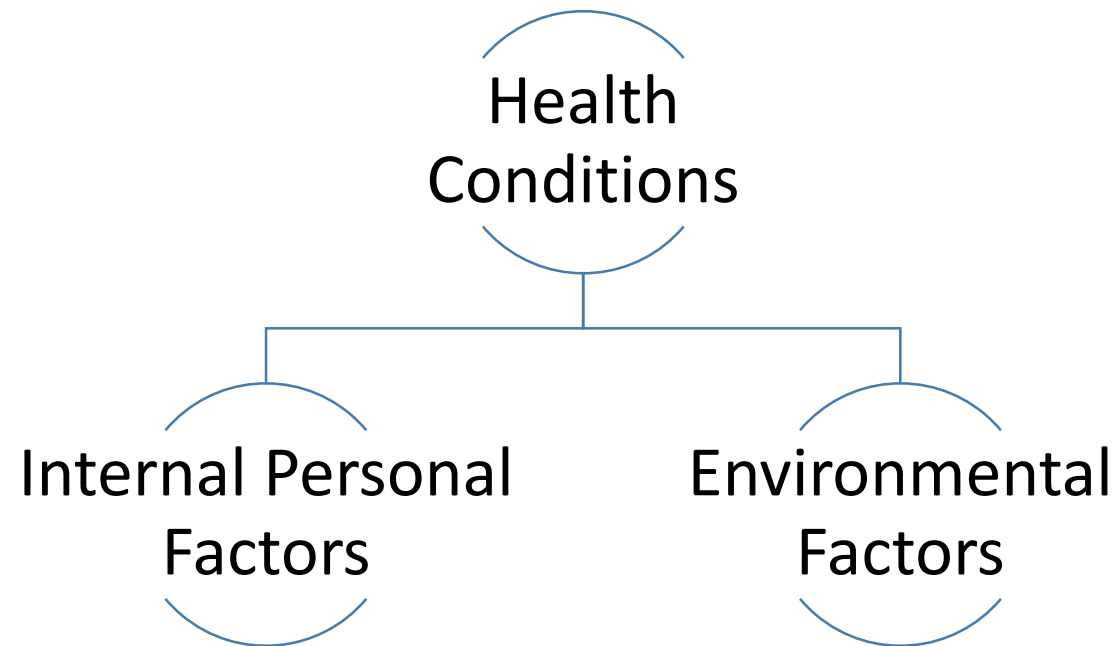
- Why it's important to take a whole person perspective when working with post-COVID patients and families
- Key psychological, spiritual, and social considerations
- Tips to help inform your practice
- Case Example



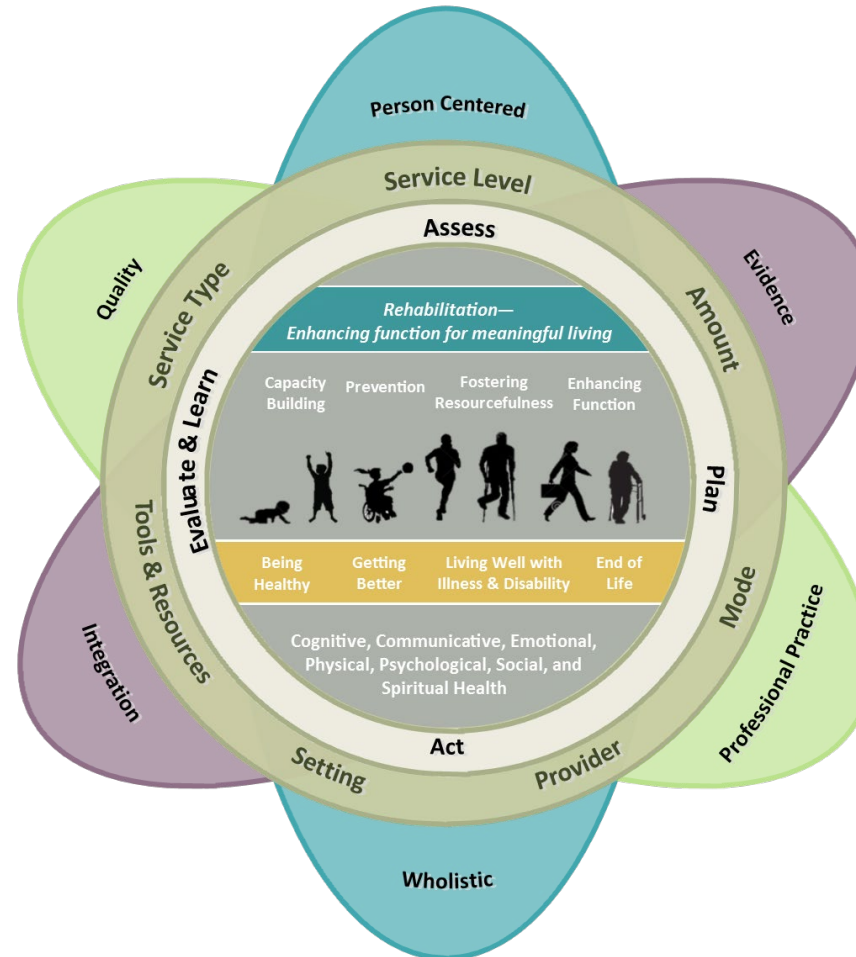
Post-COVID Impacts

World Health Organization

International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health



The AHS Rehabilitation Conceptual Framework



Patient First Strategy

- *What matters to you, matters to us.*
- What matters to patients and families drives everything we do.
- Our goal is to provide patients and families with the best possible healthcare experiences.



NICE COVID-19 Rapid Guideline:

Managing the Long-Term Effects of COVID-19

Covers care in all settings for adults, young people, and children with new or ongoing symptoms 4 weeks or more after the start of acute COVID-19 symptoms

2. Adopt a holistic, person-centred approach to clinical assessments

- Clinicians making assessments should take a holistic, person-centred, and empathic approach.¹ A carer or family member may be involved for patients who would benefit from support.¹ The assessment should encompass physical, cognitive, psychological, and psychiatric symptoms, as well as functional abilities.¹ The impact on the individual's work, education, wellbeing, and any social isolation should be assessed.¹
- Much remains unknown about the course of this illness. Patients report a wide range of symptoms of different and fluctuating severity. Many have reported dismissive behaviour from some healthcare professionals.³ It is important for clinicians to keep an open mind during assessment and listen to the patient's story.



Psychological Considerations

What Strategies Help to Support Psychological Wellness?

- Take care of the basics
 - Nutrition
 - Exercise
 - Sleep
- Social connection
- Meaningful and pleasurable activities
- Stress management strategies
- Healthy patterns of thinking

Supporting Psychological Wellness in Others

- Care for yourself
- Strive for an empathetic, caring connection
- Be attuned and inquisitive
- Facilitate use of wellness strategies and encourage healthy thoughts and behaviors
- Respond to psychological or behavioral health Issues

Attention to psychological factors can help patients and families:

- Feel cared for and understood
- Feel hopeful that the situation will improve
- Believe they can do what they need to do
- Do what they need to do to maximize treatment and health outcomes
- Optimize ability to move forward and grow
- Improve sleep
- Improve pain management
- Receive appropriate referral to needed treatment for psychological conditions or disorders

Post-COVID Psychological Impacts

- 34% incidence of a neurological or mental health disorder
 - Anxiety disorders (17%)
 - Mood disorders (17%)
 - Substance misuse disorders (7%)
 - Insomnia (5%)
- Cognitive Impacts (memory, attention, executive functioning)

Key Psychological Considerations



Facilitate story telling, acknowledgement of experience and needs, and exploring and identifying opportunities for strengthening and growth


Selected Resources


- [Help in Tough Times](#)
- [Resilience, Wellness, and Mental Health Resource Guide](#)
- [Psychological Trauma Toolkit](#)
- [American Psychological Association COVID-19 Information and Resources](#)

Mobile Tools to Promote Mental Wellness

5 free and evidence-based apps to try


1 **Headspace**
Headspace includes hundreds of guided meditations on a wide range of topics, including sleep, focus, and exercise. The free version is limited, but includes a COVID-19 collection called Weathering the Storm.



**2** **MindShift CBT**
Uses proven strategies based on cognitive behavioural therapy to help you learn to relax and take charge of your anxiety.

3 **Sanvello**
Offers tools to help ease stress and anxiety, including a daily mood tracker, relaxation audio recordings, and peer support.

4 **Happify.**
Complete happiness activities based on the principles of positive psychology, cognitive behavioural therapy, and mindfulness.



5 **Wysa**
Wysa keeps track of your mood with friendly chats and helps you fight stress and anxiety with tailored tools and exercises.

Spiritual Considerations



Meaning



Values



Transcendence



Connecting



Becoming

Spiritual Attributes

**Spirituality addresses sources of wellbeing, needs and issues
related to Spiritual Attributes**

Spiritual Impacts

Spiritual Distress:

Loss of Meaning and Connection with Self

Symptom: loss or diminished sense of self

Loss of Meaning and Connection with others

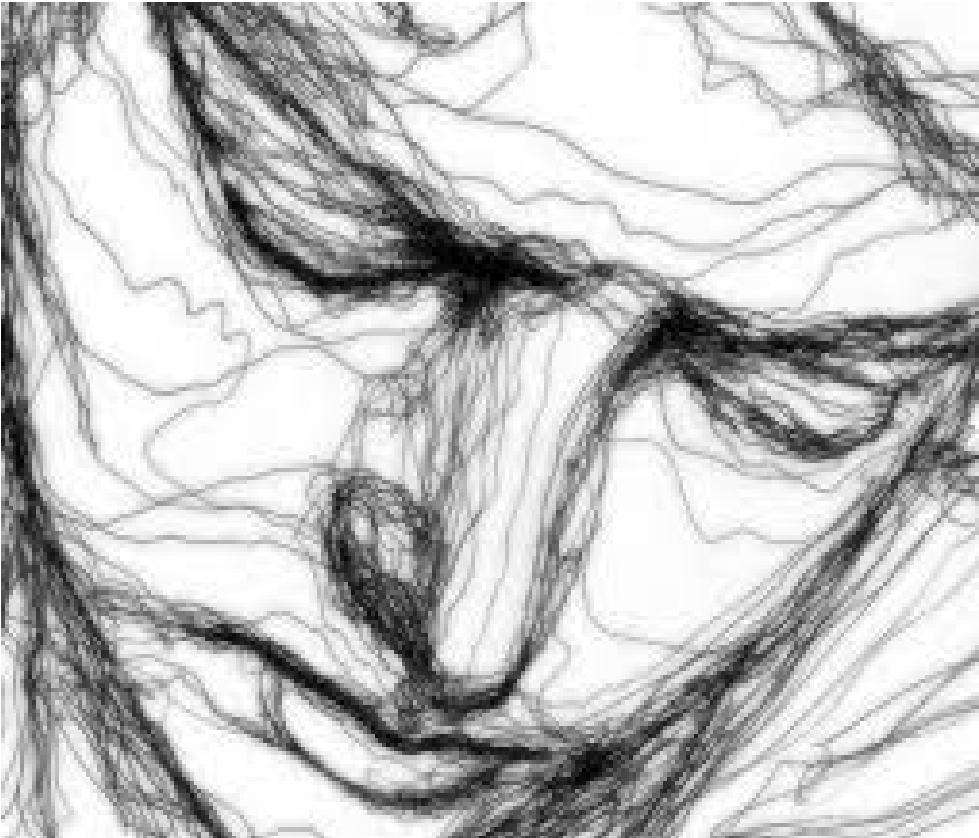
Symptom: Expressed sense of isolation and or abandonment

Loss of Meaning and Connection with Other (what one considers ultimate/transcendent)

Symptom: Asking Why?

Spiritual Considerations

Paradox: Grief and Hope



Spiritual Considerations

- **Acknowledge that the experience we are living is one of Compassion**
 - “Compassion literally means “to suffer together.” Among emotion researchers, it is defined as the feeling that arises when you are confronted with another’s suffering and feel motivated to relieve that suffering.” <http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/topic/compassion/definition>.
 - “Compassion asks us to go where it hurts, to enter into the places of pain, to share in brokenness, fear, confusion, and anguish...Compassion means full immersion in the condition of being human.” Henri Nouwen.
- **Self-Compassion**
 - Engage ways to process your own lived experience of the pandemic and build spiritual resiliency, e.g. Self-Compassion Practices (such as saying “it’s okay to not be okay”), Self-Care Strategies and Spiritual Practices.

Spiritual Considerations

- **Compassionate Care**
 - Allow patients' the space to share their experience with you. Listen. Be Present in the Moment. Acknowledge pain and suffering. Try not to minimize sorrow or "find a fix"
- **Lament**
 - Listen to patient's lament: their expressions of grief, desire, what they have trust/confidence in and what they give gratitude for
- **Practice being in the Present Moment**
 - As an antidote to anxiety, consider developing the spiritual practice of being in the present moment
- **Engage other Spiritual Practices**
 - Consider engaging other spiritual practices that can support you in living with uncertainty and in building resilience



Self-Compassion

Taking and Sending

Mantras

Gratitude

Breath Meditation

Labyrinth Walking

Lament

Contemplative Reading

Find the Feeling

Spiritual Considerations

- **Access Spiritual Health Resources**
 - Draw upon AHS Interprofessional Spiritual Health Resources
- **Refer**
 - For complex Spiritual Distress, refer to Spiritual Health Practitioners for comprehensive assessment and care

Resources

Interprofessional Spiritual Health:

- [AHS Spiritual History Tool – COVID version](#)
- [Symptoms of Spiritual Distress. Interprofessional Resource](#)
- [Spiritual Health Practitioner Interventions to Address Symptoms of Spiritual Distress: An Interprofessional Resource](#)
- [Interprofessional Spiritual Health Care Practice Wise Resources](#)

Spiritual Practices to Support Resilience:

- [Spiritual Care Brochure](#)
- [Spiritual Care Practices](#)

Social Considerations



Health Equity

“All people have the opportunities they need to reach their full health potential and are not disadvantaged due to social, economic and environmental circumstances”

(Alberta Health Services, Glossary of Key Healthy Public Policy Terms 2020)

Income as a Determinant of Health

Income impacts health by limiting or enabling the conditions and key opportunities necessary for health and quality of life.

Social Inclusion: Digital Transformation

- COVID has accelerated the pace of digital transformation, and
- Exacerbated the risk of increased inequalities and exclusion of those who are not digitally connected



Changing Family Context

- Increased demands on well family members
- Increased family stress due to health, employment changes and absence of available extended family and community supports



Considering Client's Social Context and Impacts

- Ask about client's experience during COVID
- Ask clients about barriers to services (income, transportation, social & community resources, digital literacy, technology access
- Consider your own services and if they facilitate access to service for all clients (hours, delivery mode, cost for extras – supplies/equipment)
- Consider changes within the family system as a result of Post COVID symptoms and ask about family/caregiver needs

Resources

- [Canadian Clinical Poverty Tool](#)
- A Social History Tool using the [IF IT HELPS mnemonic](#)
- Connect Care – Social Determinants of Health Module
- [Supporting Family Caregivers in Healthcare Education](#)

Social & Emotional Impacts of Occupational Disruption

- Occupational disruption
- Change in function, participation
- Role loss, change in identity
- Feelings of frustration, vulnerability
- Changes in values, priorities
- Distress related to unknown recovery timelines

Case Example - Ruth

- 53 year old, identifying as female, diagnosed October 2020, not hospitalized
- Pre-morbid: Type A personality, active in sports, high activity level, working in education. Not previous MH history
- Primary symptoms: fatigue, pain, anxiety, brain fog
- Functional limitations: meal prep, gardening, intimacy, sports, caring for her grandchildren, work, driving

Case Example - Ruth

- Psychological Factors: Significant anxiety. “The longer I am sick and not like myself, the more anxious I get.” Driving is limited due to anxiety. Admits to worrying a lot. Difficulty accepting change in function, and fears about the future.
- Social factors: Increased financial strain, potential changes in workload abilities, changes in support needs and social relationships; concerns re: accessibility to resources (including transportation)
- Spiritual Factors – “I don’t feel like myself. I normally can cope with things.”

Incorporating Psychological, Spiritual, and Social Considerations

- Be mindful of your own level of comfort/discomfort as you engage with the patient in their story, attending to your self-care as needed
- Establish caring connection, and normalize experience
- Enquire as to “what matters,” and provide space for people to share their stories, to explore.
 - Listen to and be aware of concerns (income security, anxiety or depression, spiritual distress)
 - Determine strengths and tools to explore their journey
 - Look for opportunities to address concerns and build on strengths

Incorporating Psychological, Spiritual, and Social Considerations

- Supporting strategies for stress and mood management:
 - Reframing thoughts to be more positive and hopeful
 - Relaxation techniques, wellness strategies and practices
- Setting realistic expectations and adopting strategies to encourage treatment behaviors
 - Graduated goal setting – engaging with grandchildren
 - Activity log
- Use of memory aids and tools, to support memory, concentration, and resuming normal life activities
- Assess need for resources and/or referral.

For more information

Post COVID Provider Resource Webpage (AHS external)

[COVID-19 Recovery & Rehabilitation After COVID-19: Resources for Health Professionals](#)

Allied Health Practice and Education Hub (for staff)

[Post-COVID Clinician Resources](#)

Email Practice.consultation@ahs.ca

Rehabilitation Advice Line

Rehabilitation advice can help you recover from injury, orthopedic surgery, COVID-19 or manage a neurological condition.

A healthcare professional on the line can provide you with:

- Activities and exercises to help with physical concerns
- Strategies to manage day-to-day activities affected by these concerns
- Rehabilitation services open for in-person or virtual visits
- Community organizations available for support

1-833-379-0563

9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mon-Fri

Mental Health Help Line

24 hour, 7 day a week confidential service that provides support, information, and referrals to Albertans experiencing mental health concerns

The line is staffed by a multidisciplinary team comprised of nurses, psychiatric nurses, social workers, occupational therapists, and psychologists.

- Confidential, anonymous service
- Information about mental health programs and services

1-877-303-2642

Additional Webinars

Recordings will be available:

- **June 10** – Physical Sequelae and Screening
- **June 15** – Maximizing Energy and Returning to Daily Activities and Meaningful Occupations
- **June 22** – Resuming Activity & Exercise
- **June 29** – Psychological, Spiritual and Social Considerations Important in Post-COVID Care

Upcoming:

- **July 6** – Neurocognitive Sequelae, Functional Cognition and Cognitive Communication
- **July 13** – Nutrition, Eating, Feeding and Swallowing
- **July 20** – Re-engagement in the Community

Questions?

National Institute for Health Care Excellence. (2020). COVID-19 rapid guideline: Managing the long-term effects of COVID-19. (NICE guideline NC188). Retrieved from www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng188.

Taquet, M., Geddes, J.R., Husain, M., Luciano, S., Harrison, P.J. (2021). 6-month neurological and psychiatric outcomes in 236 379 survivors of COVID-19: a retrospective cohort study using electronic health records. *The Lancet*, 8, p.416-427.