

# ***A Guide to Fighting the Mental Consequences of the Coronavirus Pandemic***

*"...the only thing we have to fear is...fear itself — nameless, unreasoning, unjustified  
terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance"*

*Franklin D. Roosevelt*

## ***A White Paper***

***Written by:***

***Dr. John T. Whiting, Managing Director***

***E-BMC - E-Business Management Consulting***



***www.e-businessmanagement.com***  
***e-mail: john.whiting@e-businessmanagement.com***

***April 4, 2020***

*Copyright 2020 © Dr. John T. Whiting*

*All Rights Reserved*

*e-mail: [john.whiting@e-businessmanagement.com](mailto:john.whiting@e-businessmanagement.com)*

*Printed in the United States of America. No part of this The Mental Consequences of the Coronavirus Pandemic white paper may be used or reproduced in any form or by any means, or stored in a database or retrieval system, without prior written permission from the author. Making copies of any part of this The Mental Consequences of the Coronavirus Pandemic white paper for any purpose other than your own personal use is a violation of the United States copyright laws.*

*This The Mental Consequences of the Coronavirus Pandemic white paper is available as is, without warranty of any kind, either express or implied, respecting the contents of this The Mental Consequences of the Coronavirus Pandemic white paper, including but not limited to implied warranties for The Mental Consequences of the Coronavirus Pandemic white paper's quality, merchantability, or fitness for any particular purpose. Neither the author Dr. John T. Whiting nor any other contributing party shall be liable to any person or entity with respect to any liability, loss, or damage caused or alleged to have been caused directly or indirectly by this The Mental Consequences of the Coronavirus Pandemic white paper.*

## *Table of Contents*

Introduction .....	1
The Importance of a Positive Attitude in Combating the Negative Mental Consequences of the Coronavirus Pandemic .....	1
Putting the Mental Threat Caused by the Coronavirus Pandemic into Perspective .....	2
Understanding the Mental Impacts from the Coronavirus Pandemic .....	2
Fear.....	3
Paranoia.....	4
Frustration .....	4
Anxiety.....	6
Stress .....	7
Depression.....	8
Transforming Knowledge into an Action Plan to Combat COVID-19 Mental Problems .....	9
Concluding Comments - Combating the Mental Consequences of the Coronavirus Pandemic .....	11
Mental Problems are Not New with the Arrival of the Coronavirus .....	11
Final Thoughts .....	14

## ***Introduction***

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic was a surprise attack targeting nearly every nation of the world. This assault represented a new and unknown deadly force that has become more lethal than war and causing indiscriminate physical devastation to the world's population and on their mental wellbeing.

While most of the attention has focused on the physical health consequences caused by COVID-19 has escalated to become a life threatening pandemic with no answers to prevention or cure and the number of deaths mounting into the many millions, mental consequences have emerged that could result in serious mental problems that will last long after the virus has been defeated.

This surprise attack has caused the population of the world to live in fear of what might be their fate as the numbers of the infected continued to grow without any answers as to how to stop it. The advent of this unanticipated and out of control assault on the world not only produces fear but other debilitating mental consequences that include stress, anxiety, and paranoia that can be as destructive as the virus itself.

It is the purpose of this paper to provide some insight into the mental consequences of COVID-19, an understanding of those mental problems and steps that might be taken to combat the mental problems.

### ***The Importance of a Positive Attitude in Combating the Negative Mental Consequences of the Coronavirus Pandemic***

Everyone is predisposed to think about events, problems, relationships and other life experiences such as the COVID-19 pandemic in a manner that is either positive or negative. This predisposition is called their attitude. The COVID-19 attack will illicit an emotional and mental reaction from people. In a negative attitude can lead to pessimistic thoughts and fear. In contrast a positive attitude can open the mind to optimism and the creative thinking required to protect against the viruses spread and infection, its defeat and a cure. The attitude toward an event such as the COVID-19 can be critical to his or her mental well-being.

What is important about attitude is that it is a state of mind that each person can control. It is important to understanding that undisciplined fear and a negative attitude are the foundation for mental problems, stress, anxiety and a sense of helplessness that can evolve into serious and long lasting mental problems.

Everyone has the ability to control and change their attitude. Roy T. Bennett in his white paper "The Light in the Heart" said "You are the master of your attitude. You cannot control what happens to you, but you can control the way you think about all the events. You always have a choice. You can choose to face them with a positive mental attitude."<sup>1</sup>

There are natural "triggers" that have an impact on attitude. If a person is threatened with harm by another person or by an event such as COVID-19 it is a normal response to become fearful and defensive and adopt a negative attitude toward that person or event. The consequence of that natural response is that attitude precludes thinking in a more positive manner and exploring constructive and affirmative actions that might mitigate the threat. It

---

<sup>1</sup> goodreads, "Positive Thinking Quotes", <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/positive-thinking?page=4>

takes self-discipline and rationale thinking to fight off the predisposition to engage in a negative manner and to adopt a more positive attitude. Bennett says “Don’t waste your time in anger, regrets, worries, and grudges. Life is too short to be unhappy.”<sup>2</sup>

The key to reducing and controlling the mental consequences of the Coronavirus is understanding the power each person has to make decisions to control the tendency to have a negative attitude and adopt a more positive attitude which makes it possible to acquire the information needed to create a plan to eliminate the threat and maintain good mental health.

### ***Putting the Mental Threat Caused by the Coronavirus Pandemic into Perspective***

The Coronavirus has been a surprise attack on the world. In just a few months it has turned the world upside down. In December the world was watching China trying to cope with an unknown virus by taking extreme steps to isolate the source of the outbreak in a relatively unknown location, Wuhan, China.

Little did anyone think that in just a few short months virtually every nation of the world would be inundated by COVID-19 and that it would take shutting down social and economic systems to achieve a state of extreme isolation would be required to slow the advancement of the virus. Few expected that the explosion of COVID-19 would require the Federal Government set policy requiring that people totally alter their behavior by staying at home from work and school, isolate themselves from other people, maintain a separation from other people they came in contact with by a minimum of six feet, washing hands regularly and contacting a health provider if symptoms of COVID-19 emerged.

While the threat of the virus is frightening enough, the extraordinary steps required to protect from it spreading and the mental and economic consequences can be as impacting as the virus itself and likely to last long after the threat of the virus has subsided. Extended requirements to stay at home, separate from friends and family for undefined lengths and not engage in other normal societal interactions compounds the fear of the virus contributing to a debilitating impact on mental health.

Some note that too little attention is being paid on the mental impacts on all people facing the threat of COVID-19 by the media, scientists and those responsible for controlling it resulting in limited or no information regarding how to cope with the mental consequences caused by COVID-19. People are not powerless in dealing with the mental problems associated with the Coronavirus.

### ***Understanding the Mental Impacts from the Coronavirus Pandemic***

While there is no substitute for professional help in addressing the mental problems that may have been caused by COVID-19, the following information is provided so that individuals who may not have access to professional help can begin to understand the mental problems and adopt life changes that might help reduce the mental problems.

An essential step in responding to the threat of mental impacts from COVID-19 is to gain an understanding of what causes these negative mental reactions. The next step may be to

---

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

develop and activate a program based on that knowledge to reduce these mental consequences. Fear is a significant underlying factor in the emergence of mental problems. .

## *Fear*

All human beings experience fear. It should be understood that fear is a natural human occurrence that tells the person experiencing fear that there is a possible danger that needs to be recognized and may require some diversionary action to avoid that specific danger. Fear of fire, fear of excessive speed, fear of heights, fear of dark places, fear of personal attack are all examples of the types of dangers that people face that cause a fearful response. Fear is overcome when the individual becomes aware of a way to protect from the danger.

Fear is nature's way of letting a person know that there is a threat to our wellbeing and that care and action needs to be taken to protect against the consequences of that threat. However irrational and uncontrolled fear can lead to mental problems. One source notes "Fear is the path to the Dark Side. Fear leads to anger, anger leads to hate, hate leads to suffering"<sup>3</sup> and "Ignorance is the parent of fear."<sup>4</sup>

Fear according to experts is defined as follows: "Fear is an emotion induced by perceived danger or threat, which causes physiological changes and ultimately behavioral changes, such as fleeing, hiding, or freezing from perceived traumatic events."<sup>5</sup> Further, fear of the unknown or irrational fear is caused by negative thinking about events such (as the Coronavirus) which arises from anxiety accompanied with a subjective sense of apprehension or dread.<sup>6</sup>

The perceived threat imposed by the Coronavirus has caused significant physiological and behavioral changes in the world's behavior resulting in having people flee to places they perceived to be safe, to attempt to hide from exposure or become incapable of responding in a rational manner to the event. Most facing the COVID-19 pandemic have a high level of apprehension or dread.

The question is "What can a person do to combat the effects of fear?" There are 5 relatively easy steps that can be followed to combat fear. They are<sup>7</sup>

- Step 1: Accept fear as a reality that everyone experiences and only goes away when there is a rational understanding that the threat causing the fear can be eliminated.
- Step 2: The fear must be acknowledged to leverage it into the courage that is required to combat it.
- Step 3: Allow yourself to feel afraid without being rendered incapable of responding to it.

---

<sup>3</sup> Inc.com, "17 Inspiring Quotes to Help You Face Your Fears", <https://www.inc.com/sims-wyeth/17-inspiring-quotes-to-help-you-face-your-fears.html>

<sup>4</sup> The Positive Blog, "56 Growth Mindset Quotes to Motivate You and Inspire Success", <https://www.positivityblog.com/22-inspirational-quotes-on-fear/>

<sup>5</sup> Wikipedia The Free Encyclopedia, "Fear", <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fear>

<sup>6</sup> Isa Feldman Barrett; Michael Lewis; Jeannette M. Haviland-Jones (2016). Handbook of Emotions. Guilford Publications. pp. 751–73. ISBN 978-1-4625-2534-8. Archived from the original on 2017-03-02.

<sup>7</sup> The Tools, "5 Steps to Overcome Fear", <https://www.thetoolsbook.com/blog/2017/7/9/5-steps-to-overcome-fear>

- Step 4: Take affirmative steps to face the fear not hide from it.
- Step 5: Practice the steps and modify them as required to overcome the fear

To address the fears related to the Coronavirus each individual feeling fear needs to adopt a plan based on the steps and rigorously follow those steps.

### ***Paranoia***

The absence of knowledge and the proliferation of rumors and incorrect information regarding the threat of the Coronavirus can cause some people to become paranoid about what is to come. Paranoia is an instinct or thought process which is believed to be heavily influenced by anxiety or fear, often to the point of delusion and irrationality.<sup>8</sup> A delusion is a belief that is clearly false and that indicates an abnormality in the affected person's content of thought.<sup>9</sup> Irrationality is described as an action or opinion given through inadequate use of reason, or through emotional distress or cognitive deficiency.<sup>10</sup>

Paranoid irrationality may be addressed by a strategy based on asking the following questions:

- Is there any basis in reality to support this belief as always being true?
- Does this thought encourage personal growth, emotional maturity, independence of thinking and action, and stable mental health?
- Is this belief one that, if you follow, will help you overcome this or future problems in your life?
- Is this thought one that, if you follow, will result in behavior that is self-defeating for you?
- Does this belief protect you and your rights as a person?
- Does this thought help you in connecting honestly and openly with others so that healthy, growth engendering interpersonal relationships result?
- Does this belief assist you in being a creative, rational problem solver who is able to identify a series of alternatives from which you can choose your own personal priority solutions?
- Does this thought stifle your thinking and problem solving ability to the point of immobilization?
- When you tell others of this belief, do they support you because that is the way everyone in your family, peer group, work, church, or community thinks?
- Is this thought an absolute — is it a black or white, yes or no, win or (lose) no options in the middle type of belief?<sup>11</sup>

### ***Frustration***

When people are confronted with a problem they can't solve they become frustrated. It is generally regarded as true that the bigger the problem that can not be solved the greater the frustration.

---

<sup>8</sup> Wikipedia, "Paranoia", <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paranoia>

<sup>9</sup> Industrial Psychiatry Journal, "Understanding Delusions", <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3016695/>

<sup>10</sup> Wikipedia, "Irrationality", <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irrationality>

<sup>11</sup> PsychCentral, "Answer Your Irrational Thoughts", <https://psychcentral.com/lib/answer-your-irrational-thoughts/>

The advent of the Coronavirus and the ongoing lack of the knowledge, a clear plan of attack COVID-19, the absence of honest and accurate information, the lack of diagnostic tests, hospital capacity and essential supplies has resulted in the uncontrolled growth of the problem and heightened frustration..

A more clinical definition states “Frustration is an emotion that occurs in situations where a person is blocked from reaching a desired outcome.”<sup>12</sup> The factors that have blocked people from feeling that the COVID-19 problem is being controlled and a solution is in sight has been an absence of knowledge and information about the virus and the magnitude of the threat.

The leaders responsible for protecting the nation’s citizens from COVID-19 have ignored previous warnings of the threat that a virus could have devastating impact on the world. Those responsible for protecting the nation tended to place political interests above focusing on the scientific facts that documented the consequences that could come from a lack of capacity to respond to an epidemic. By continuing to engage in decision making that placed political and economic interests above taking aggressive action based on scientific research to combat the virus.

As American citizens watched the Administration go from calling the COVID-19 pandemic “a hoax” and “a Democratic plot to discredit the President” to it being similar to the flu and will pass quickly to eventually acknowledging after four months of delay that the Coronavirus could result in at minimum 100,000 American deaths.

The absence of accurate information, a lack of science based decision making, and delay by those who placed their own self-interests, political aspirations and ignorance of the true nature of the threat of the virus, the advice of the experts and misrepresentation of the facts related to the availability of physical protection equipment (PPE), tests and other supplies critical to a solution, the Administration has had a significant impact on the frustration of the nation and has directly contributed to the death of millions of Americans.

One expert listed the following a causes of frustration:

- Micromanagement
- Lack of progress and insecurity
- Lack of faith and belief
- Lack of recourse for poor performance and communication<sup>13</sup>

The seriousness of the COVID-19 pandemic has caused those threatened by the virus to micro manage their behavior based on information provided by the Administration, scientists tasked with identifying the causes and finding a solution, the media and social media. With the lack of honest, consistent and reliable information and the lack of clear progress and growing insecurity the frustration level has continued to grow.

This lack of honest and creditable information has resulted in a lack of faith in the ability of the Administration to make the decisions required to correct the problem in real time and the

---

<sup>12</sup> Psychologistanywhereanytime.com, “Understanding Frustration”, [https://www.psychologistanywhereanytime.com/emotional\\_problems\\_psychologist/pyschologist\\_frustration.htm](https://www.psychologistanywhereanytime.com/emotional_problems_psychologist/pyschologist_frustration.htm)

<sup>13</sup> CoreAspect.org, “Causes of Frustration”, <https://coreaspect.org/basic-concept-causes-frustration/>

belief that the growth of COVID-19 can be stalled and deaths prevented. To compound the frustration there appears to be no accountability for the politically driven decision making, dishonesty, poor performance and miscommunication of those responsible for protecting the nation from the pandemic and no recourse for that misguided, self-serving policy making being a clear cause of the deaths of millions of Americans.

Individuals finding themselves frustrated by the lack of progress and growing insecurity caused by the COVID-19 can take steps to help control their frustration. The following represents the type of actions that can be taken:

- Ask Yourself, “What Is Working in This Situation?”
- Focus On What You Want to Happen
- Remove the “Noise” and Simplify
- Identify Possible Solutions
- Take Action
- Visualize a Positive Outcome to the Situation
- Stay Positive<sup>14</sup>

While there is much that is contributing to a feeling of frustration, there is also much information that can cause people to believe there is light at the end of the tunnel. As much as the Administration has failed to give people confidence in being able to activate a plan to address the problem, the scientists and the pressure the data that has collected to better understand the virus and how to address it has given people cause to believe that steps can be taken to control the spread and eventually come up with a cure that will bring an end to this epidemic.

There are actions that people can take to redirect their frustration into knowing that they are contributing to reducing the impact of the epidemic. Those actions range from religiously following the Administration Guidelines of staying at home, social distancing, washing hands regularly, not touching the face and keeping at least 6 feet in distance from others.

Additional actions can include volunteering to help essential organizations in fulfilling their role, to engaging in actions to assist neighbors in coping with the challenges created by the virus, to contact their political leaders and expressing their thoughts regarding what decisions need to be made to more efficiently and effectively respond to the pandemic.

The key to eliminating frustration is maintaining a positive attitude based on the belief that the pandemic will end and by taking steps and engaging in action to help achieve a solution.

### *Anxiety*

Another mental consequence of events such as the Coronavirus is anxiety. Anxiety is described as an emotion characterized by feelings of tension, worried thoughts and physical changes like increased blood pressure. People with anxiety disorders usually have recurring intrusive thoughts or concerns.<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> Life With Confidence.com, “Frustration - 8 Ways to Deal With It”, <https://www.life-with-confidence.com/frustration.html>

<sup>15</sup> American Psychological Association, Topics, “Anxiety”, <https://www.apa.org/topics/anxiety/>

Individuals may experience anxiety in varying degrees ranging from minor anxiety attacks which most people experience during their lives and other anxiety may be chronic and debilitating. The following represent actions that people experiencing anxiety can take to treat and reduce their anxiety:

- get enough sleep
- engage in routine meditation
- stay active and routinely exercise
- adopt a healthy diet
- avoid alcohol
- avoid coffee and caffeine
- quit smoking cigarettes<sup>16</sup>

These steps to can help control anxiety are relatively easy and can have a significant impact on reducing anxiety.

### ***Stress***

Fear unaddressed leads to stress. In a medical/ biological context stress is a physical, mental, or emotional factor that causes bodily or mental tension. Stresses can be external (from the environment such as COVID-19, psychological, or social situations) or internal (illness, or from a medical procedure).<sup>17</sup> The common effects of stress can affect your body, your thoughts and feelings, and your behavior. ... Stress that's left unchecked can contribute to many health problems, such as high blood pressure, heart disease, obesity and diabetes.<sup>18</sup>

If an individual has no way to help control stress significant negative consequences can impact on both a person's body and mind. As a result it is important to have a strategy and active plan to manage stress. If an individual experiences the symptoms of stress, taking action to manage stress can have many health benefits. The following represent some of the actions that a person feeling the effects of stress can develop into a stress management plan to reduce stress:

- Keep a positive attitude.
- Accept that there are events that you cannot control.
- Be assertive instead of aggressive. Assert your feelings, opinions, or beliefs instead of becoming angry, defensive, or passive.
- Learn and practice relaxation techniques; try meditation, yoga, or tai-chi for stress management.
- Exercise regularly. Your body can fight stress better when it is fit.
- Eat healthy, well-balanced meals.
- Learn to manage your time more effectively.

---

<sup>16</sup> Healthline, "What natural remedies are used for anxiety?",  
<https://www.healthline.com/health/anxiety#natural-remedies>

<sup>17</sup> MedicineNet , "Medical Definition of Stress",  
<https://www.medicinenet.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=20104>

<sup>18</sup> Mayo Clinic, Patient Care Health Info, "Stress symptoms: Effects on your body and behavior"  
<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/stress-symptoms/art-20050987>

- Set limits appropriately and learn to say no to requests that would create excessive stress in your life.
- Make time for hobbies, interests, and relaxation.
- Get enough rest and sleep. Your body needs time to recover from stressful events.
- Don't rely on alcohol, drugs, or compulsive behaviors to reduce stress.
- Seek out social support. Spend enough time with those you enjoy.
- Seek treatment with a psychologist or other mental health professional trained in stress management or biofeedback techniques to learn healthy ways of dealing with the stress in your life.<sup>19</sup>

To address stress emanating from the Coronavirus a person needs to adopt a plan based on the steps noted above and rigorously follow those steps.

### ***Depression***

As people get more impacted by the mental pressures the come with such frightening events as the Coronavirus pandemic they frequently become increasingly depressed. Possible causes of depression include faulty mood regulation by the brain, genetic vulnerability, stressful life events (such as the COVID-19 pandemic), medications, and medical problems. It is believed that several of these forces interact to bring on depression.<sup>20</sup>

Most people associate sadness with depression. Sadness is only one of several symptoms of depression. Other symptoms that are common in both clinical and situational depression include:

- a loss of appetite
- a loss of interest in activities you previously enjoyed and hobbies
- trouble sleeping or insomnia
- irritability
- fatigue
- crying spells
- difficulty concentrating
- feelings of hopelessness and pessimism, as well as a lost sense of worthiness
- suicidal thoughts and even attempts

A diagnosis of depression requires that at least five of these symptoms be present.<sup>21</sup>

Tips offered to recover from depression include;

- Write in a journal.
- Exercise daily.
- Eat healthy.
- Pamper yourself by taking a long, uninterrupted bath or watching a feel-good movie.
- Accept help.

---

<sup>19</sup> WebMD, Stress Management, “Stress Management Tips”, <https://www.webmd.com/balance/stress-management/stress-management>

<sup>20</sup> Harvard Health Publishing, “What causes depression?”, <https://www.health.harvard.edu/mind-and-mood/what-causes-depression>

<sup>21</sup> Healthline, “Symptoms of depression”, <https://www.healthline.com/health/depression/depression-and-divorce#symptoms>

- Socialize.
- Sleep.<sup>22</sup>

Additional steps proposed to help reduce depression include:

- Get in a routine.
- Set goals
- Exercise
- Eat healthy
- Get enough sleep
- Take on responsibilities
- Challenge negative thoughts
- Check with your doctor before using supplements
- Do something new
- Try to have fun<sup>23</sup>

Individuals facing depression caused by COVID-19 should adopt the steps noted above and implement a plan based on these steps to help get depression under control.

### ***Transforming Knowledge into an Action Plan to Combat COVID-19 Mental Problems***

Having an understanding of the mental problems that can come with COVID-19 provides a foundation for transforming that information into a plan that can reduce these problems. As is true with attacking and resolving any problem, it is essential to set specific goals, develop a realistic action plan based on facts, establish and rigorously follow a routine that implements the elements of the plan and monitor the degree to which the plan is reducing the mental problems.

The first step in addressing the fear and anxiety related to COVID-19 is to follow the CDC protection guidelines.

#### Protecting Yourself:

- Clean your hands often
- Avoid close contact

#### Protect Others:

- Stay home if you're sick
- Cover coughs and sneezes
- Wear a facemask if you are sick
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily

After taking the steps recommended to protect yourself and others mental associated with COVID-19 may emerge that need to be controlled and mitigated.

---

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> WebMD, "10 Natural Depression Treatments",  
<https://www.webmd.com/depression/features/natural-treatments#1>

The foundation for developing an action plan must be the commitment to work on maintaining a positive attitude based on the belief that the virus pandemic will come to an end, and surviving during until the problem is resolved can best be achieved by engaging in actions that are supportive of maintaining good mental health.

In addition to developing, adopting, and rigorously following a mental health action plan it is important to be mentally and physically active. The time spent in isolation provides an opportunity to pursue activities of interest that were not pursued due to other priorities. There is also time to investigate new interests, hobbies or develop new skills which could not be pursued due to a limit on time.

The requirement to stay at home may lead to the discovery of interests and talents that had previously been unknown. Taking a shot at learning to paint, writing a song or a poem might produce some interesting, rewarding and satisfying results. Most people have life experiences that provide ample material for writing a book. The internet can provide help to people with interest in capturing a favorite story, experience, event or photographs in book form. One such resource is Write a Book For Fun ([www.writeabookforfun.com](http://www.writeabookforfun.com)), an online resource that provides visitors with how they can easily engage in the book writing process and have their book published online in either hard copy or eBook format and have the book offered for sale on Amazon, Barnes & Nobel and other worldwide book sales outlets.

Another potential activity that can make excellent use of the stay at home requirement is reading. In most homes there are a number of books that have been collected on a wide range of subjects that never got read due to a lack of time. Now may be a good time to include reading a book in the daily routine. For example, If you are a woman with an interest in learning to play golf or a significant other who would like their female counterpart to learn to play golf reading “The Women’s Guide to Learning to Play Golf for Fun” offers a resource specifically geared to making the game interesting for women.

Eating a healthy diet is also a common recommendation to counter the mental problems that can accompany COVID-19. This recommendation can also provide an avenue for positive activity including researching healthy diets on the Internet, adding healthy recipes to the otherwise routine menu and learning to cook new dishes. Developing a recipe book that organizes the newly discovered healthy diet options into categories such as breakfast, lunch and dinner; everyday dishes, special holiday items and favorites. This type of activity can not only provide positive and constructive use of the time spent in seclusion at home but can result in better health. If the diet book becomes a item of personal satisfaction and pride, consideration can be given to sharing it with others by publishing it as a book following the information noted earlier regarding writing a book and publishing it for free.

Many of the therapies to help people cope with mental problems advise social interaction and reaching out regularly to friends and family. While the CDC recommends social distancing, staying home from work and isolation for an extended period this does not mean that people cannot remain in contact.

The Internet provides a vehicle for people to continue to socialize electronically even if they are confined to their home. Facebook, Twitter and other social media provide an opportunity for people to remain in contact, exchange information and provide comfort. Free applications such as Skype (free download at [www.skype.com](http://www.skype.com)), Zoom (free download at [www.zoom.us](http://www.zoom.us)), Cisco Webex ([https://www.webex.com/downloads.html/](https://www.webex.com/downloads.html)) and FaceTime

(<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/facetime>) are easy to use computer/Internet based resources that people can use to maintain face-to-face contact in real time with friends, family and business contacts. People should include routine virtual social contact to lessen the mental consequences of the Coronavirus.

Finally the Coronavirus has caused a major change in family and personal relationships. The stay at home policy has provided families, couples and living in the same residence to take a new and different look at their behavior and relationship.

Prior to the pandemic work, school, outside social activities and other interests left little time for families and couples to spend time together. As a consequence many of these relationships suffered because time was not taken to pay attention to the needs, wants and problems of the other member(s) in the relationship. Children lacked parental attention, guidance and mentoring. Husbands and wives were all too often moving in separate directions, busy with work and too tired at the end of the day to engage in the activities that tend to nurture a marital relationship and keep it strong.

The closing of schools has led to the requirement that parents, at least become aware of their child's education, and at best get personally involved with their schooling at take responsibility for their progress.

It is ironic that while much of the pain associated with the requirement to stay at home, not go to work and sequester for an extended period of time away from the outside world, this forced isolation provides an excellent and serendipitous opportunity for families and couples to make otherwise unthinkable advances in the quality of there relationships that can last for a lifetime. It is also predictable that there may be a birth explosion and population boom in November and December of 2020.

Franklin said "Dost thou love life? Then do not squander time, for that is the stuff life is made of." While the CDC guidelines require people to stay at home to help protect from being infected by COVID- 19 and to mitigate the spread, a positive that may come from this requirement may be the discovery of many new activities, talents, abilities and improvement in personal relationships that make life after the Coronavirus epidemic more enjoyable and fulfilling.

### ***Concluding Comments - Combating the Mental Consequences of the Coronavirus Pandemic***

#### ***Mental Problems are Not New with the Arrival of the Coronavirus***

The mental health of people around the world was under increasing pressure long before the advent of the Coronavirus. Nations were engaged in endless wars, climate change was threatening the extinction of the planet, and the distribution of wealth was widening with 1% of the population hoarding much of the wealth while ignoring the needs of the remaining 99%, the poverty and homelessness of their fellow citizens. Corporations and business leaders were routinely making decisions to increase profits and their greed resulted in the development and promotion of products known to be dangerous and life threatening to their customers and no one was willing to muster the courage or commitment to hold those individuals personally accountable.

Racial bias, ramped discrimination, religious and cultural intolerance, individual differences, economic decay and political corruption were causing the world and the United States to become increasingly divided and alienated with little or no effort for the countries of the world, the citizens of the United States or the political leaders charged with the task of protecting their citizens incapable of putting finding a solution to all of these problems above their selfish interests.

Political leaders pursued the accumulation of more power and economic wealth while increasing numbers of their citizens became victims to their self-serving policies, were denied adequate healthcare, and lived pay check to pay check too often facing a dilemma that resulted in falling into poverty, homeless, drug addiction and criminal behavior.

The worldwide problems of the world and the United States prior to the arrival of the Coronavirus was a growing cause of mental health problems and little was being done to attend to this concern.

The great irony of the tragedy of the Coronavirus pandemic may, in retrospect be that it forced the citizens of the world to stop doing what they were doing, pause for an extended period of time and observe the reality of their existence.

The pandemic defined its own reality. Nations of the world could no longer place their selfish interests above making decisions that would protect their citizens from infection while finding ways to cooperate in developing and enforcing protective policy, share the knowledge, data, supplies, protective equipment, research and expertise required to defeat the virus.

The virus attacked everyone. The rich, the poor, the young, the old, the smart, the not so smart, the religious, the not so religious, the law breakers and those who were law abiding, the Republicans and Democrats, the hones and the dishonest and even the healthcare givers and those who were in poor health. No one was immune from being victimized. As a consequence these diverse groups either had to abandon their self-interests and find ways to work together to protect from being infected, to find a way to mitigate the advance of the pandemic and discover a cure or suffer the consequence of international devastation.

The COVID-19 took away the last source of international, national, business and personal self-confidence when it caused the economy, which had been at an all time peak, to crash. International trade was halted, all but essential businesses were closed and workers told to go home resulting in uncertainty about their economic future. Everyone was now forced to pay attention to the reality of the totality of the impact that the virus was having and no untruth about its cause, advancement, damage and containment would survive as the truth was clearly communicated by daily statistics documenting the number of people infected and the number of people who had died.

The unanticipated and uncontained worldwide impact of the Coronavirus not only had a major impact on the mental health of the citizens of the world and the United States, it forced leaders to change their behavior.

Political leaders have responsibility for protecting their citizens from harm. The performance of political leaders around the world and in the United States could no longer be covered up by misrepresentations, false promises, lies, dishonesty and propoganda. Science, factual data and the accurate information was being reported on a daily basis that exposed information provided by leaders who had a self-serving personal agenda who were not telling the truth. If

promises were made by political leaders and not kept everyone became aware. If false statements were made about the threat of the virus to protect a personal opinion, political policy or the economic wellbeing of the country, the need to eventually close down society and business, self-isolate, remain at home for an undetermined period of time and the collapse of the nation's economy left no question as to the failure of leadership to tell the citizens of America the truth.

The lack of quality decision making based on science, data and a well conceived plan based on performance, return on investment (ROI) and management by objectives (MBO) criteria is making it possible for the virus to continue to spread, more people to get infected and more American to die. Poor performance on the part of the political leaders with responsibility for protecting citizens from the threat of the virus is compounded by a political party environment that has for too long a time. placed the interests of the party and its leaders above the best interests of the people. The inability of the members of the political parties to work together has been a core reason for the problems facing the country to survive, and why an individual with a self-serving business reputation, no political leadership experience and questionable moral, ethical and integrity traits to be elected President of the United States. The nation's citizens were so fed up with the failure of our political leaders to work together and sacrifice their selfish interests to serve the best interests they had sworn to serve that they were willing to vote for anyone who promised to drain the swamp of political incompetence.

The advent of the Coronavirus has, for at least the time being, acceptance of selfish political party partisan behavior. Elected political decision makers in Congress and the members of the Presidential administration are under the microscope with the citizens of the United States watching daily reports on their performance. If they are performing well the facts and scientific data will document that the virus is being mitigated in an efficient and effective manner. If they continue to engage in business as usual by placing their selfish interests above defeating the virus, more people will be infected and more Americans will die. At some point the nation's citizens and voters will cease to tolerate this incompetence and take action to replace the incompetence with leaders who are dedicated to provide reasoned leadership based on facts, truth and solving not only the CORVID-19 pandemic but the other problems facing the country.

The United States, its people and its political system have an opportunity to come to the realization that the problems facing our country, the impact it is having on the nation's mental health and the absence of a demand for quality and honest political leadership by voters can not only be changed but can result in a dramatic change in the status of the nation, the wellbeing of its people and a future absent of many of the problems that had seemed unsolvable prior to the arrival of COVID-19.

While the Coronavirus crisis will come to an end the question remains will the people of the United States learn the lessons to be learned from having to work together, put aside personal and political differences, respect each other regardless of personal differences and replace greed with a recognition that personal wealth is derived from the labor of many who should share in the profits, and that such existential problems as climate change, poverty and health problems can be solved if people have learned the value of respecting others and working together. Will self-interest reemerge after the Coronavirus has been defeated or will we become a happier, healthier and more prosperous nation because of the lessons the virus has forced us to learn?

Whatever the outcome, people must realize they are not powerless in dealing with mental problems. The question is will people take responsibility for their own mental health and take the actions required to ensure their mental wellbeing?

### ***Final Thoughts***

It is not the purpose of this paper to provide a substitute for qualified professional help. It is the purpose of this paper to provide information about mental problems that might emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic to people who may not have access to professional help, but might benefit from information that helps them understand the source of the problems and simple steps that might be taken to help mitigate the problem.

It is important to recognize that an extraordinary number of people will not only face the health related problems that come from the Coronavirus, but they and those not infected will face mental consequences that are likely to have physical and mental problems long after the virus has been defeated and a cure has been discovered.

The best way to respond to these threats to the mental wellbeing of those suffering from the problems is to seek professional assistance from expert, licensed and certified professionals. It is not the purpose of this paper to provide a substitute for qualified professional help. It is the purpose of this paper to provide basic information about mental problems that might emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic to people who may not have access to professional help, but might benefit from information that helps them understand the source of the problems and simple steps that might be taken to help mitigate the problem.

It is hoped that this paper will help people experiencing mental problems emanating from the Coronavirus pandemic to know that there are actions they can take to help them take action to protect their mental wellbeing and to adopt a more healthful attitude knowing they have an ability to control their feelings and the knowledge that the pandemic will pass and that they need not have lasting mental problems from it.

Anyone who may wish to provide a constructive comment regarding the content of this paper and suggest content that might increase its value to those suffering from the mental consequences of COVID-19 are invited to contact the author with those constructive offerings.

Dr. John T. Whiting  
john.whiting@e-businessmanagement.com