

# THE EFFECT OF COVID-19 ON MENTAL HEALTH IN DUTCHESS COUNTY MARIST CLS

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# COVID'S IMPACT

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- Among prevailing sociological theories, the hypotheses has been proposed that if 20 percent of any population experiences an ongoing and disruptive crisis, the effects will be measurable across approximately 20 established social stability indicators (Journal of Research in human and Social Science).
- Significant societal trauma increases risk that an entire society will be impacted with unexpected social upheaval (National Center for PTSD).
- Scientific evidence finds that viruses are as old, and maybe older, than living cells.
- COVID is a world-wide endemic phenomena, and we have little idea where it is taking us.

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- More than 700,000 people in the United States have died from Covid-19, according to Johns Hopkins University. That surpasses the estimated US death toll from the deadliest pandemic of the 20th century (John Hopkins University)
  - We have yet to even speculate about the costs of impending trauma from Covid.
  - May 1968 - 2,415 casualties Vietnam War.

# CHRONIC TRAUMA

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- Among the most consistently and repeatedly traumatized persons in the United States are those living with chronic, persistent, serious mental illness.
- The last major initiative to address mental illness on a federal level was the Community Mental Health Act.
- The year was 1963 and John F Kennedy was president.

# COMMON SYMPTOMS OF TRAUMA

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- Anxiety
- Depression
- Cognitive Confusion

# COMMON SYMPTOMS OF MENTAL ILLNESS

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- Anxiety
- Depression
- Cognitive confusion

# PROGRESS?

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- In the cost-driven medical marketplace, psychiatry and, more broadly, mental health have suffered more than the rest of medicine. Private health insurance benefits have been cut significantly, and the public mental health system is in a state of collapse that varies only by degree from state to state (*American Psychiatric Association*).
- **Timothy's Law, 2006 NY State**

# SYMPTOM SEVERITY

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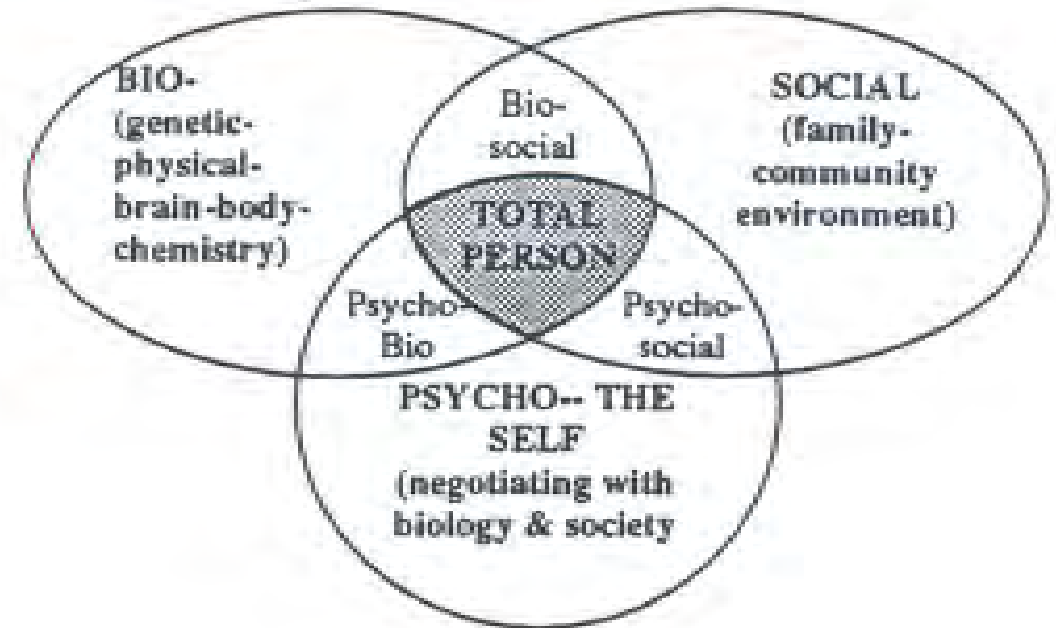
- Former APA president Lawrence Kolb, M.D., in a letter to the editor of the American Journal of Psychiatry (1989), writes of the "heterogeneity" of PTSD...At one time or another PTSD may appear to mimic every personality disorder,"
- “Chronic trauma can manifest symptoms falling along the spectrum of psychosis”  
(National Center for PTSD)
- Today as a nation, we need to consider these complications, then consider the problems when adding a substance use disorder, familial issues, environmental and social inequity in health systems, and public policy arguments supporting potential violent reactions.



# The Bio-Psycho-Social Model

Each person is born with:

- 1) **BIO GENETIC POTENTIALS** – good and bad activated by
- 2) **ENVIRONMENTAL OPPORTUNITIES** (good) and stressors (bad)
- 3) **THE PSYCHOLOGICAL SELF** struggles to balance (1) (2)



# MENTAL HEALTH RISKS

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- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (since COVID):
- 63% of 18- to-24-year-olds reported symptoms of anxiety or depression, with 25% reporting increased substance use;
- and 25% saying they'd seriously considered suicide. (CDC population survey, 2021).

# THE INCREASING BURDEN OF TRAUMA

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- Recent epidemiological surveys conducted in general populations have found that the lifetime prevalence of depression & mood disorders, is in the range of 10% to 15% as defined by the World Mental Health Organization (2017)
- This data was compiled before the COVID pandemic. Since then, risks have become multiplicative.
- The burden of trauma and manifestation of positive and negative symptoms extends far beyond the disorder itself (B/P/S).
- Symptoms may be expressed across domains and affect the subjective daily experience.

# THE INCREASING BURDEN OF TRAUMA

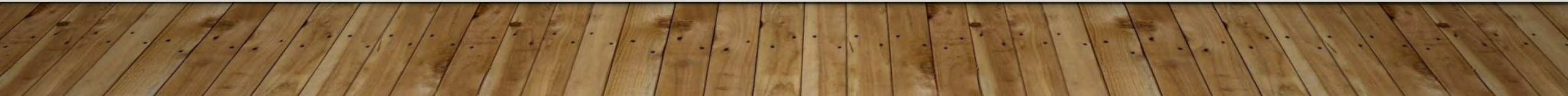
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- Published reports suggest that the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has had a negative effect on children's mental health
- Beginning in April 2020, the proportion of children's mental health-related ED visits among all pediatric ED visits increased and remained elevated through October. Compared with 2019, the proportion of mental health-related visits for children aged 5–11 and 12–17 years increased approximately 24% and 31%, respectively (NIH, 2020).

# THE INCREASING BURDEN OF TRAUMA

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- Teens go through a period of increased emotional fluctuation and are like a Ferrari with weak brakes. The emotional center of the brain, the limbic system, which controls emotions, is fully connected, but the frontal lobe that sharpens critical thinking isn't well-connected (University of Pennsylvania's Perelman School of Medicine, 2021).
- Exposure to complex trauma in children & adolescents carries an enormous cost to society, both in lives impacted and dollars spent. Although in many ways the costs are inestimable (National Child Traumatic Stress Network).

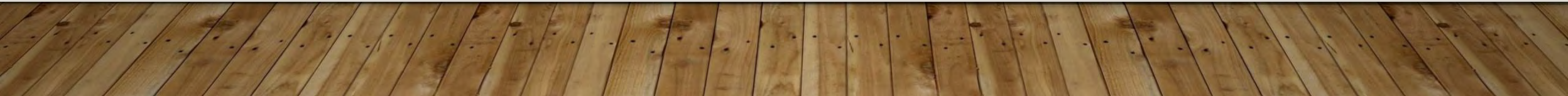


# THE INCREASING BURDEN OF TRAUMA

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- Adolescents aged 12–17 years accounted for the largest proportion of children’s mental health–related ED visits during 2019 and 2020. During weeks 12–42, 2020, the proportion of mental health–related visits for children aged 5–11 years and adolescents aged 12–17 years increased approximately 24% and 31%, respectively compared with those in 2019; the proportion of mental health–related visits for children aged 0–4 years remained similar in 2020.

Future trends?



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- In August, for the first time in the pandemic, the rate of coronavirus infections among children topped those for adults ages 18 to 64 and seniors, driven by the highly contagious [delta variant](#), according to a Washington Post
  - In September pediatric caseloads across Tennessee peaked, with 86 children hospitalized, including 21 in intensive care units and 12 on ventilators, [state data show](#). So far, 20 children in the state have died of covid-19.
  - **Will this be the winter of the children's pandemic?**

# LEGACY OF COVID

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- This is a public health crisis with consequences that may last generations, and for which we do not currently have the policy tools or resources to address (NY Times, 4/12/2021).
- Researchers at Pennsylvania State University recently led a study that introduced the Covid-19 Bereavement Multiplier. By this team's research findings for every person who dies of Covid-19, nine loved ones are left behind.



# LEGACY OF COVID

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- Children who lose a parent are at elevated risk of traumatic grief, depression, poor educational outcomes, and unintentional death or suicide, and these consequences can persist into adulthood (Journal AMA)
- Moreover, COVID-19 losses are occurring at a time of social isolation, institutional strain, and economic hardship, potentially leaving bereaved children without the supports they need.
- Increasing risk of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) factors across the life experiences of children.

# LEGACY OF COVID

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- Journal (AMA) The CDC is using a 0.078 multiplier to estimate the number of children 0-17 impacted by parental death's due to covid. (for 700,000 = 54,600 children).
- Relying on data projections, A natural herd immunity strategy that results in 1.5 million deaths demonstrates the potential effect of inaction: 116 900 parentally bereaved children.
- Our treatment systems already demonstrate poverty of child/adolescent clinicians and prescribers.

# LEGACY OF COVID

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- “almost two-thirds of the young adults have some symptoms of anxiety or depression or other psychological problems” (Dr. Shaker Saxena of The Harvard School of Public Health, 2021).
- Will we be able to adapt already impoverished systems to meet expanding needs?

# LEGACY OF COVID

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- The burden will grow heavier as the death toll continues to mount. Black children are disproportionately affected, comprising only 14% of children in the US but 20% of those losing a parent to COVID-19
- Unique to this situation is a highly polarized electorate, and COVID has become a potent issue for projection.
- For many, their grief is compounded by denial of the circumstances of loss.

# TRENDS

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- In the United States, the majority of funding for mental health treatment supports hospital based mental health services, which treats less than 20 percent of daily emerging mental health problems (WHO, 2021).
- Where will treatment be located?

# RESOURCE ALLOCATION

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- States' denials of health care coverage, including Texas' and other states refusal to expand Medicaid, contributed to 461,000 excess deaths in 2018 that would have been averted if the United States had kept up with other wealthy countries, a tragedy documented in a Lancet Medical Journal report (NY Times, 2/16/21).
- This is not just a question of poverty, equity or access; it is a question of policy.