

National Research Institute's Principal Investigator and Psychiatrist, Dr. Tshekedi Dennis, Explains the Impact of COVID-19 on Mental Health

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NRI's Principal Investigator, Dr. Tshekedi Dennis, is a board-certified Psychiatrist with over ten years of research experience and over 20 years in clinical practice. Dr. Dennis has conducted dozens of studies in indications such as Depressive Disorders, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), General Anxiety, Schizophrenia, Dementia, Addiction and many more.



Tshekedi Dennis, MD

Given the challenges we have all faced this year, we wanted Dr. Dennis' thoughts about some of the effects the COVID 19 restrictions have had on people's mental health and some advice to help manage these concerns.

"In my practice, I have seen the COVID 19 crisis impact people's overall mental health in a significant way. It has been something many people have had to confront, regardless of a pre-existing mental health condition or not. I have seen an increase in people's anxiety and stress levels as well as depression given the isolation from the stay-at-home orders this past year.

Some practical things people can do to manage these symptoms are to limit watching an excessive amount of news and instead try to get outside more; feel the sun and wind while wearing face covering and practicing social distancing. A walk around the neighborhood can boost your mood and decrease anxiety levels. This is also a good time for people to get back to hobbies or other pleasurable activities such as arts and crafts, board games, music, or trying something new like learning a foreign language or writing in a journal about these experiences. It does not have to be an activity that you excel in as long as it is enjoyable.

Another important piece of information is for people to be more mindful of how to cope with the distresses of COVID. It is not only about material support but about emotional support as well. From my perspective, people cannot struggle alone, and there is support out there such as family and friends, not just clinicians. Reach out to family members to lean on each other and share what helps each other. Sometimes it feels uplifting just by talking to someone, it is therapeutic."

