

UArizona Psychologist Explains How COVID-19 is Creating Widespread 'Pandemic Fatigue'

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HOW COVID-19 IS CREATING WIDESPREAD 'PANDEMIC FATIGUE' — It is a phrase that puts the stress, anxiety, and depression many people are feeling right now into perspective: pandemic fatigue.

Experts are concerned that the next wave of illness will be a one centered on mental health and brought on by the wide variety of concerns over COVID-19.

“We’re going through and we’re experiencing something that none of us have experienced in our lifetimes,” said UArizona Professor and Clinical Psychologist David Sbarra.

“‘Pandemic fatigue’ is probably a short-hand way of saying that we’re more stressed, we’re experiencing significant depression and anxiety, and we’re burnt out and we’re probably grieving our old lives in a lot of ways.”

He explained that so much of our identities have been altered because we are living our lives in a different, unfamiliar, and scary way. Our routines have been changed or thrown out the window completely. Without the stability, it is common to have a feeling of being lost in everyday life.

“So not thinking about, ‘I’m going to meditate every day. I’m going to be the best version of myself,’ I threw that out the window by the end of March,” Sbarra said.

While meditation may work for some, Sbarra suggests that helping your mental health starts with looking at the stresses in your life and identifying what you can control.

“Not having one extra drink every night, the idea of not “doom-scrolling” before I go to sleep, the idea of making sure that I don’t give up on my exercise routines and those kinds of things,” Sbarra listed off. “Or sort of... ignore the relationships around me.”

Those things can, in turn, help you rest more when you go to bed.

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