



THE CENTENNIAL SENTINEL

COVID-19 Pandemic and Anxiety Increase

By: Dara Cohn

All of a sudden, your breathing increases along with your heart rate, you begin to feel dizzy, you're now sweating, and you're shaking. Before March 2020, nothing like that has ever occurred to you. That was a panic attack. During the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been an increase of diagnosed anxiety throughout the country. According to Mental Health America, a nonprofit organization that creates programs that promote helping with mental illness and ending the stigma around mental health, more than 88,000 additional people have developed anxiety or depression as a result of the current health crisis.

There have been many things that have brought on the sudden increase in anxiety and other disorders. One of the main things that have brought on the increase of anxiety is the fact that we are all isolated. The human species is very social, and the isolation has taken its toll on all of us. There have been individuals who have yet to follow the guidelines and isolate voluntarily. However, those of us who have been following the rules and isolating, have felt lonely lately. According to reports

from Mental Health America, the people who were screened said their new anxiety has been brought on by the isolation.

There are other reasons that the diagnoses have increased during the pandemic. Another big factor of anxiety increasing throughout the COVID-19 pandemic is the fear of contracting the virus. As soon as anyone sneezes now, we all begin to think the worst. We rush out to go get tested. Speaking from personal experience, I made an emergency visit to my doctor to be tested for COVID after noticing a scratchy throat! Just to make certain. What has been reported in the news about this illness has brought on a huge surge of anxiety.

Another factor causing an increase of diagnoses is the not knowing what is truly going to happen with our educations. I sat down with Bethune-Cookman University's student, Kayla Charles. The only question I had asked her was, "How has COVID impacted your anxiety as a

student?" Ms. Charles responded with "Right before I was supposed to go back to school, I told my mom I wanted to go back to be in that educational environment. After seeing the news and the cases and seeing how many students were returning, I got nervous. Then I found out we were still having roommates and I decided not to go back. I had to make a bunch of changes with the university and I had the fear that my financial aid was going to be revoked if I didn't notify them soon enough. My anxiety only really increased due to the changes." The fact that our education can be changed all due to increases of the virus can be nerve-wracking no matter what grade you're in. Just with a minor fluctuation of this virus can cause the entire education system to change dramatically and that is hard on everyone because it is honestly like starting the school year all over again.

Xiamora Alvarez, a licensed clinical social worker and psychotherapist was interviewed recently. The first question I put to her was, "Since the beginning of the pandemic, have you noticed an increase of anxiety in your patients?" Xiomara responded with "Absolutely, even for people who have never suffered with anxiety before. There has been an increase of all types of disorders." The most beneficial part of interviewing Ms. Alvarez was learning different coping strategies to deal with all of this. The two most useful tools we can exercise right now are to practice breathing exercises and to figure out what brings us peace. The breathing exercises will help calm you down during a panic attack. Once you notice the signs you are having a panic attack, remember the breathing exercises.

Breathing is the best thing for alleviating the frightening condition of a panic attack. Then, find things that bring you peace. It is quite important because as you start to worry about being stuck at home, you can turn to these things to relax. For example, when I start to notice an increase in my nervousness, I'll read a book or I'll blast some music. It may take some trial and error to find out the things that bring you peace, but once you find them, it will bring you to ease during these tough times.

For everyone, COVID-19 has brought some sort of anxiety or panic. Whether it be from the isolation, or from the fear of contracting the illness, we all can come together to agree this has been an extremely fearful time. Luckily, we can do things that will lessen our anxiety, and for that I am sure we are all grateful.

We found that all our pieces had a common thread, that of fear. This year has been like no other. As we approach its end, we hope that you and your families are safe and that 2021 will be filled with hope and peace.

Our “Mother” Nature?

by Roselyn Cardenas

Fear is something that is instinctual in all humans. From the beginning of time until today, we have been given the flight or fight response to keep us safe. Though the fears of today may be a little different than those of old, we as a society have become more advanced and have made our world safer as a whole. No need to worry about being eaten by a saber tooth tiger! But there is one fear that for a time the world was able to ignore. It has now come back to hurt us more than ever before: the fear of the natural world.

One of the biggest polluters in the world is the carbon gas emissions from cars. These emissions that cars release have affected the air quality, and thus, people for many years. But the worst things these emissions have done is slowly, over time, raised the earth's temperature, which in turn has warmed the earth significantly. This has led to more devastating natural disasters every year. That is the topic we are here to discuss. How have humans caused their own worst fears to become a reality? Because of their careless actions and complete disregard for the only place they have to call home, we now face one of the most difficult challenges of our time.

In a recent CNN article, it states, "roads and about 100 houses were swept away or partially destroyed" (source- CNN). The worst part about an event like this is that every year they seem to become more common with places around the equator. Not only that, but every year storms and hurricanes have become gradually stronger as the earth warms. Italy regularly suffers from horrible flooding in places like Venice. The city is older, and now with sea levels rising it is predicted that Venice will soon be experiencing constant flooding. The flooding

will in turn slowly erode the bottoms of building that will cause the collapse of those buildings.

Within a few days of the storms that ravaged Europe, there was another hurricane poised to strike the Gulf Coast, hitting parts of the U.S. and Mexico. Another article from CNN states, "the storm could strengthen into a category 3 hurricane." These types of hurricanes are not uncommon to the region; however, the repeated brutality of the storms has over time weakened the region. Hurricanes like Harvey and Katrina caused major devastation to the areas affected.

A large amount of money is poured into these states every year for relief; however, it just acts as a band-aid applied to a continuous problem. Even if we solve the problem of climate change, these types of natural disasters will not stop. It is planet earth at work. But if we are successful at reversing course, Mother Nature would no longer be something to fear. Rather, we could co-exist and live in harmony with her, helping one another. We have a long way to go before we are able reach that goal, but there would be no reason to fear nature then; her beauty is enchanting, and her power is impressive. We should fear what will happen if we succeed in killing her.

"Fear defeats more people than any other one thing in the world." — Ralph Waldo Emerson

Food for thought from our staff.

Roselyn Cardenas

Emily Carvajal

Dara Cohn

Erin Simberlund

Fear of Failure by Jordin Simberlund

In today's society, the presence of failure in almost any aspect of life would not allow prosperity. Housing and healthcare, two examples at historically high prices, give reasons for younger generations to rightfully fear failure. At such a young age, children are taught to not fail... to pass the test, to move to the next grade, to go to college and get a good job. This is drilled into us, the 'American dream,' and anything less than that is considered failure.

The clinical term, 'atychiphobia', is basically the fear of shame that comes from failure. This phobia can range from the common difficulty of breathing to paralysis from action. We can associate this with the fear of not living up to a certain standard, like the American dream.

Now more than ever, with the addition of Covid-19, the pressure to maintain grades in school is astronomically high. The fear of not living up to your previous standard in school is becoming a real problem all around the world.

To better understand what the pressure to succeed can feel like for a young person, I interviewed a 22-year-old college student, Jordin Simberlund, who also happens to be related to me.

When asked about how dread of failure and the inclusion of the American dream was ingrained in the minds of our youth, she responded with:

"I wish, when I was in high school, they would have shown me more than just the core subjects we would face in college, like science, math, and art. And that there were more options, that they talked more about trade schools. I feel like I have the fear that I will wake up one day and realize that I have just failed in life or whatever else. I mean I'm 22 and I feel like I'm too old to change my direction in life. That, and that at 18 I'm told to choose the rest of my life forever. Also, the fear of failing mom and dad is a pretty big thing of mine, that

I will not live up to what they want me to be and that, even though I know they don't, that they will look at our cousins and see what they have done and in some way, feel some type of way about it.

She closed her statement with:

"In today's world, we have to decide between the debt of college and keeping a full-time stable job to promote prosperity. It is tough to think that these are the only viable options when coming from a middle-class household, but it is what I have work with. And that if you fail either option, then what do you really have, and that is the mindset that I have and I am sure many others have as well."

I also interviewed a fellow high school student, journalist, and personal friend, Roselyn Cardenas. When asked how school had affected her fear of failure, she responded:

"It is the stem of my fear. I'm a generally creative person, but school is so rigid in its system that I don't think it allows for creativity. I had a few teachers actually care about that aspect."

She noted the effect those teachers had:

"The ones that allowed creativity encouraged me, having good feedback encouraged me, and bad feedback hurt me. Encouragement has always helped the fear, but it is slightly worsened from the fear of letting those teachers down... but overall, it does give me more confidence and less to fear over"

From the perspective of both a college and high school student, you can see what the fear of failure can encourage to prosper in the mind. This fear can allow for both positive encouragement and negative drawbacks. It's safe to assume that everyone can have that lingering thought of what if I'm not living up to a standard, or what happens if I fail? It's human to be fearful of something, and if that something is failure, then you're not alone.

*This is the first chapter in a series by Stormy
Rose*

Idle Town

“Generation Why” is what they named criminal kids like me. The name was more to code than just the “Misfit Kids” or Juveniles.” To anyone else in this town, we are the helpless, selfish, one-of-a-kind Millennium kids, that all wanna die, so anytime we did something wrong, a death sentence was upon us. We were seen as the worthless, cursed with too much time; we got into trouble and lost our minds. Yeah, I've heard that a million times in my life. Now, after hearing all those things, seeing kids disappear out of the town one right after another, now I sit here in my gray jumper with hand and ankle restraints, about to say goodbye to my life. I was what they called a Greek God-one of the most wanted criminals in this town- Kid Krow.

Kid Krow. Those words alone were like a stab to the heart. Ethan Gray, or Kid Krow is who the Greek Gods worked with, but to me he was more than that. Ethan saved me from my dead-beat father and made me who I was. He was protective of me, treating me almost like I was a child, but I do admit I was in love with him. He was finally caught and put to rest two years ago. Him being his crazy self, he admitted to all his crimes instead of fighting. Kid Krow, I mean Ethan, he is- I mean was, the biggest criminal. Other criminals looked up to him and wanted to be just like him, till he was caught and then Greek Gods became the most wanted.

Greek Gods like me worked with Kid Krow, but he took the blame for all of us. After he got caught, some Greek Gods like Derek and I came out of hiding, completed

Kid Krow's unfinished business, and got caught in the process. The next group of criminals on the list were called the Checkmates. Checkmates were killers. They had no problem killing anyone and everyone who crossed their path. Everyone they killed was either business or just because they enjoyed it so much. Then came the Affluenzas, the criminals who committed theft. Whether it was cars, drugs, diamonds, or gold, the Affluenzas loved the thought of being rich and having "daddy's money." No person really made them happy unless they were loaded, and every friend they had was either just like them, or was being used for their money. Next came the Maniacs; the name really says it all, but to be clearer, the Maniacs never committed crime but were just far out crazy with no rhyme or reason. They also had broken out of their facilities one too many

times. And at the bottom were the Comfort Crowds. Now the Comfort Crowds, they didn't have any part in the criminal world, but us criminals gave them their own name. These were the ones who were innocent. They could have taken the blame at the wrong place, at the wrong time, and could even have been set up; apparently, there were a few good kids in Generation Why.

Any and all kids who got caught became like property, with a printed barcode skin-deep on the back of our necks. I guess it was some sort of separation and organizational thing for them to brand us rather than use our names. We were now meaningless property, being throw around like a three-year old's rag doll. If you fought it, they'd fight back like we were less human than they were. An Affluenza tried running out; they almost made it, but they were tackled and beaten till they couldn't

move. I didn't want that. Not that I wanted to go by lethal injection, but it's better than going out in pain. After dragging the lifeless body away, I could see Derek, my boyfriend, across the room looking down at his feet, nervous, like when Ethan was taken away. Derek was Ethan's best friend since they were kids; they committed their first crimes together and everything. He was one of the Greek God, too. When Ethan was gone, Derek was the only one there for me who helped me, and well, we fell for each other. After the longest hour of my life the door opened and in came the Mayor of our town, Sunset Season. The Criminals got quiet and she began talking, "Today's your guys' lucky day." The Mayor spoke and cleared her throat, folded her arms together and paced around the room. Lucky day? What was this all about? The kids cheered, and she raised her

hand for them to quiet down. "Sorry, only for six of you," she corrected herself. I sat up in my seat and paid close attention; what was so lucky about a death sentence? "There will be six chosen ones, and for those six they will be going to a new town and given a second chance." She huffed and stood in her place. You could hear whispers around the room as she exited and they began the process of our death sentences. They lined the kids up for their injections and scanned the barcodes on their necks.

Wait! Who are the chosen?
Are they lying to us?

"Our world's ending at noon.
Could we all just move to the moon?"

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Thank you for reading us!