

## @ This Moment | Staying at Home with Charlotte Fritz, Cynthia Mohr, and Dara Shifrer

- As an AP in a grant funded program serving the general public, **how might I support my small team who are working from home?**
  - Charlotte Fritz: I think frequent communication (check-ins to see what kind of support everyone needs) and providing as much flexibility as possible can be really helpful during this time. Establishing an atmosphere of trust and community through check-ins as well as providing employees with job security (as much as is possible) is also important.
- How can **workplaces support their employees who are managing both working from home and taking care of children?**
  - Charlotte Fritz: I think frequent communication (check-ins to see what kind of support everyone needs) and providing as much flexibility as possible can be really helpful during this time. Establishing an atmosphere of trust and community through check-ins as well as providing employees with job security (as much as is possible) is also important. Some work organizations have also adjusted their leave policies to allow employees more flexibility.
- Schools and parents are worried about students **getting behind in their learning** during this time. **How might schools pivot their focus when they reopen so this idea of "being behind" isn't a relevant factor to students' formal education?**
  - Dara Shifrer: I actually think the universal-ness of the pandemic will help with this. Virtually every student will be returning to school 'behind.' Standardized testing has been temporarily cancelled in several places. Maybe federal, state, and district curriculum and benchmarks will be adjusted? Schools may try to make up for lost time with an adjusted school year in 2020-2021. Ultimately, I think this event has made enough of a splash globally that it will increase acceptance of any differences in educational outcomes this cohort of students experiences.
  - Cynthia Mohr: I hope they will focus on students' social and emotional processing of the experience, to help them manage their ability to cope with the crisis and adapt to what will be a new normal. The experience also provides a unique learning opportunity that touches many subjects, which could be very enriching and make a number of topics more personally relevant.
- How can we **change the language around the inequities** that are further exacerbated by the pandemic. **How do we educate others** about the disparities?
  - Dara Shifrer: I think this is a super important question, a question that was important before the pandemic and a question that has become increasingly important as our nation has politically polarized. It's important for communicating with family and friends who hold different views, for educators,

and even for effective social media posts. Social psychologists find that messages are better received when they don't include loaded buzzwords. People will instantly reject what is being said if it reminds them of views they disagree with that they hear about on the media. I also think it's important to make the other person heard, and at least attempt to understand why they're thinking the way they are. Chapter 9 in Arlie Hochschild's *Strangers in Their Own Land* explains this beautifully. Self-righteousness, arrogance, and condescension definitely reduce the effectiveness of communicating something others disagree with :)

- Have you ever studied about how the **students with extreme poverty and more actually succeed** and study how we can use their efforts as a help
  - Dara Shifrer: My response to this question during the event was actually more focused on high-poverty schools and neighborhoods than poor individuals. Concentrated poverty exacerbates any negative individual level effects but is common in the US because of segregation.
- Do you think some of these **social distancing procedures will continue long-term** and if so which ones and **how will that impact** things like class sizes, social gatherings, sporting events, and how sick-leave may change for employees.. other impacts?
  - Cynthia Mohr: It is somewhat hard to predict. Some immediate and obvious changes include things like greeting others with handshakes, which is likely to fall out of favor. Experts have also indicated that resuming events with large crowds, such as large sporting or music events, will be the last to return. My hope is that this experience has shined a light on the importance of good sick leave policy and the significant problems that result when employees have no choice but to work when sick.
- This crisis hinges on so many unknown factors: we might not know who is infected or how long this will last or when there will be a vaccine, etc. **How do human beings deal best with situations like this where we cannot see an end in sight or we feel afraid of invisible viruses?**
  - Cynthia Mohr: We often adapt by focusing on the things we can control, whether it is trying to keep a regular daily routine at home or learning what we can about prevention methods for protecting oneself from the disease. This is not to say that humans are always adaptive when they try to gain control.... Some of the negative reactions we have seen, such as refusing to wear a mask, are also attempts to regain control of the stressful situation. We also see people jumping to "get back to normal" perhaps before it is safe to do so. Returning to the idea of how to deal best, it would be focusing on what one CAN control in the situation, informing oneself, focusing on the shorter term, trying to find positive in the current situation, and practicing gratitude. These are a few examples.

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**Questions asked and answered during the webinar:**

- What's one thing that surprises you about the pandemic or sheltering-in-place?
- What **part does social media play in supporting or damaging people's emotional wellbeing** during this social isolation?
- How can we as **parents of grade school students** help our children **cope with the stress of distance learning**?
- How will **future employers view the class of 2020**?
- How do you see the **transition back to work and back to the classroom**?
- For some of our **first-generation students** report that it has been difficult to transition to the remote home space. They note that their parents/guardians perceive their studying/reading as a leisure activity. **What suggestions can we offer to them?** Thank you.