



The Panic Emotions and Coping Strategies of in the Background of COVID-19

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Abstract

With the increasing number of confirmed cases of new coronavirus pneumonia in the world, bad news on the Internet is overwhelming and panic is spreading quietly. Moderate panic is normal and can help us respond to the epidemic more effectively. But excessive emotional response may cause social chaos. When panic is shared by members of a group, collective panic is formed. Panic sentiment in the context of the epidemic is affected by factors such as health threats, freedom threats, resources threats and information distortion. At present, how to transform panic emotions into moderate alertness to the epidemic is crucial, to avoid catastrophic cognitive processing and information overload and bring about stronger anxiety, properly do relaxation training, learn to carry out effective risk communication, and learn to Interpretation of fear as a challenge is an effective measure to deal with the panic caused by the current epidemic.

Introduction

As the number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 to increase worldwide [1], bad news on the Internet is overwhelming and panic is quietly spreading. Faced with COVID-19, why do we panic? Panic refers to the state of inner uneasiness, fear, and panic caused by fright or threat. Under the influence of the epidemic, individuals feel threats from different levels. Panic is a kind of social behavior when a crisis occurs, and it is a specific psychological reaction when people face imaginary or real threats. A moderate amount of panic is normal and adaptive,

helping us to respond more effectively to outbreaks. But emotional overreaction is not only useless, and may cause social chaos. When panic was Shared by some members of the group, the formation of collective panic, as a social psychologist le pen, regardless of group members who are, their mode of life, career, character and wisdom is similar, once to get involved in groups, they have a collective consciousness that makes them feel, think, do all are different from those of feeling, thinking, when they are alone.



How can panic be shared by group members and form collective emotions? There are two main explanations of current social psychology. First, Emotional Contagion. Emotional infection refers to the process by which emotion expressors spread their emotions to the observer [2,3]. In the process of social interaction, people will automatically perceive the emotional changes of surrounding people through non-verbal cues such as facial expressions, postures and body movements, and unconsciously adjust their emotions to be consistent with those around them. The development of Internet technology provides a more convenient channel for emotional transmission. A new experimental study, based on nearly 690,000 Facebook users, found that people can unconsciously experience the same emotional states expressed by their friends even when exposed to the Internet with no nonverbal cues at all. At the same time, people's cognitive processing of social information is selective, and negative information can attract people's attention more than positive information. In particular, people are more sensitive to information that may endanger the safety of life. Internet technology has accelerated the spread of all kinds of information, expanding the proportion of negative information about the epidemic in People's Daily access to information. This has certainly accelerated the contagion. Second, instrumental emotion regulation. In this view, people can actively adjust the type, intensity, and time of the emotions they experience according to specific goals, even if this emotional experience is negative. The current epidemic situation is sudden and uncertain. People can respond to others in a consistent manner, on the one hand, they can reduce their own uncertainty, that is, determine whether their emotion type, emotion intensity is appropriate, and whether they have responded appropriately to the current environment. On the other hand, it can also meet the needs of belonging and improve the sense of security, that is, I am like everyone, I am not a special case, etc. It is worth noting that not only individual emotions will be affected by collective emotions, but sometimes individual emotions will in turn affect collective emotions. For example, a Weibo post said, "Today, the number of confirmed cases has doubled, and the epidemic is getting worse. Everyone is likely to be infected. What should I do if I get an infection? It is easy to feel panic and anxiety after being affected by it. In addition, emotional contagion can be generated in the interaction between multiple people, and it is continuously enhanced, not only through direct interaction, but also through indirect ways to complete the interactive impact on surrounding people.

Social psychology research shows that emotions can be spread across individuals, resulting in a gathering of shared emotions in groups and society. Panic not only occurs at the individual level, but also at the group level; at the same time, collective panic does not mean the simple summation of individual panic, but a newly generated psychological phenomenon with its own characteristics and functions, reflecting interpersonal, intergroup and The macro-psychological relationship formed by the mutual construction between individuals and society. Once a group panic occurs, it will affect group members like a virus. Therefore, compared with individual panic, group panic has a stronger impact on group behavior and social life. The main causes of panic in the context of the current epidemic include the following.

Main causes of panic in the background of epidemic situation

Health threats

People who are in good health may not need to pay atten-

tion to their health often, but in the face of coronavirus, everyone has become a susceptible group. At this time, even people who are in good health begin to have anxiety about death and a sense of uncertainty about their health. This is a primitive, deep-rooted anxiety. As early as in ancient times, humans were often attacked by beasts and diseases, so they developed anxiety to keep humans alert and avoid danger at any time. With the development of human society, daily life no longer needs to be vigilant. However, the raging of the new coronavirus evoked our death anxiety and once again lost the sense of security exposed to the natural environment. It also has two sides. On the one hand, when this anxiety is moderate, it will allow us to take protective measures and avoid going out to protect ourselves; on the other hand, when this anxiety passes, it will continue to make people in panic The mental state becomes very fragile.

Freedom is threatened

More important than money or love is freedom. You can't feel it when you have it, but you can't face it when you lose it. Once a person is infected with a novel coronavirus, he or she faces treatment in isolation and is deprived of freedom for a considerable period of time, which is the second reason for people's fear of the outbreak. Why do some suspected patients perform escape tactics to resist admission? It's not hard to understand from this point of view. On this basis, they may also develop all kinds of unrealistic catastrophic imagination, such as the hospital infected more, no disease was treated out of the disease ah, and so on, and eventually lead to the absurd behavior of fleeing the doctor.

Resources are threatened

Masks, alcohol, goggles, gloves, these things people usually do not buy at all, after the epidemic, became a tight supply for people to fight for. The more scarce it is, the more people are fighting for it, even if there is inventory in the house, even after buying it, I am afraid that I will not be able to buy it when I want to use it. Scarce mentality means that when we feel that something is lacking, thinking will focus on the urgent needs in front of us and make our ability to solve them more acute. But it also has a negative effect. First, it will narrow our horizon and ignore other important information; second, it may make us lack planning, easy to rush to achieve, and make wrong decisions in a hurry. Because of the scarcity of medical protective equipment and the lack of security caused by the epidemic, people focused on the immediate needs under panic, made the wrong decision, and spent excessive prices on excessive purchases [4].

In fact, when every scattered individual is in panic, it is not enough to cause group behavior. Another important catalyst is the herd mentality. Herd psychology is a normal human psychological phenomenon, but when people are in a panic mood, certain behaviors that can temporarily relieve anxiety, or some inflammatory terrorist speech, will become extremely contagious. For example, masks, alcohol, goggles, gloves, and Shuanghuanglian oral liquid alleviate people's death anxiety. Once they see someone in the circle of friends buying in line, they will follow suit. Rumors have become a tool used by unscrupulous businessmen or the media, as well as a vehicle for spreading panic among the public. Seeing several people around me turn a shocking gossip message, quickly forwarding it without thinking, asking the source, it is easy to create a group panic atmosphere. So, who caused our panic? Is it a corona virus, a creator of rumors, a circle of friends, or hoarding illegal businesses? It is not difficult to see from the above that they may all

be external reasons, but it is the heart of each of us that really creates panic.

Information distortion

People's perception of crisis is often inaccurate. The potential consequences of a crisis are only one of the factors that affect risk perception. People's access to information and their understanding of information amplify risk. At present, the vast majority of people understand the new coronary pneumonia epidemic through the mass media. Therefore, people's awareness of the risk of the epidemic is largely constructed by the media. Many media reports are emotionally provocative, such as "shock!" "Heavy!" "Human incapability!" And so on. The rapid spread of this information on the Internet has caused excessive panic among people, and people have lost their reason and even made actions that violate social norms. In addition, panic emotions have regional differences. Psychologists have revealed the "psychological typhoon eye effect", which means that the farther away from the center of the crisis event, the stronger the response to the event. It is the so-called external storm and the internal waves. The above reasons are the main factors that cause people to panic.

Turn panic into a healthy awareness of the epidemic

Avoid catastrophic cognitive processing and let rationality return

The public should learn about the epidemic through official channels. We should not only pay attention to the epidemic, but also remain calm and rational. In the face of the same threat, some people respond moderately, while others are excessively fearful [5], which refers to different emotional reactions caused by differences in cognitive processing. Some people, for example, have a cough and are terrified by the thought, "fuck, am I infected?" The correct approach is to wear a mask in time, first pay attention to observe their symptoms, when necessary first on the network platform for consultation. Replace negative thinking with positive action. In order to quickly return to reason at certain times, you can also try to discuss your ideas or decisions with more rational people around you.

Avoid information overload and bring greater anxiety

In the Internet era, we can always capture information about the epidemic from our circle of friends and weibo. But during self-isolation, too much information may not be beneficial and may actually exacerbate existing anxiety. If you're aware that you're compulsively swiping your phone, make it a rule to focus on information about the outbreak only at certain times. In addition, the information we receive is often one-sided, or even untrue rumors! Rumors are characterized by their occurrence in dangerous or turbulent periods, their variety of contents, their rapid spread, their spread of panic, and their true background. The half-truth and half-falsehood of rumors is exactly the catalyst of panic psychology. Therefore, it is necessary to learn information management, pay attention to information released by authoritative media, rationally screen information, and do not spread information that cannot be confirmed as authentic. Finally, have a rational, positive way of thinking. The ABC theory of emotion holds that people's emotions are not caused by a certain inducing event itself, but by the interpretation and evaluation of the event by the people who have experienced the event. It is because people often have unreasonable beliefs that we have emotional problems [6].

If you are more anxious and sensitive to the epidemic information, you can set yourself a frequency of attention, such as attention every two hours, no more than 10 minutes each time. The rest of the time requires you to return to other things in life, such as sports, entertainment, housework.

Relaxation training

You can calm yourself through breathing relaxation training: You can use the "316" rule: (1) Inhale, slowly and deeply press "1-2-3" to inhale, fill the chest with air for about 3 seconds, breathe It should be even, comfortable and rhythmic; (2) Restrain breathing, inhale the air and pause for about 1 second; (3) Exhale, naturally, take about 6 seconds to slowly and uniformly breathe the air under the lungs come out. As you breathe, you can imagine that the tension is slowly driven out. Training 5-15 minutes each time, three times a day, will help you effectively relieve some anxiety. Maybe when you are doing relaxation training, the thoughts that make you anxious will still flash in your brain. Don't resist it immediately, think of it as a "meteor" in your brain, and witness it across your mind. Sudden panic is the same. You can't control its appearance. What you need to do is accept it, but do not take it away: accept panic, accept anxiety and fear, accept your vulnerability, accept uncertainty, Don't deny and deliberately exclude them. You can also tell yourself: "I'm really sensitive and nervous, but I can't pay too much attention, doing something else will gradually get better."

Affective risk communication

The current epidemic situation is highly uncertain. What are the characteristics of the new coronavirus? How will the epidemic develop? How to protect yourself? At the same time, the epidemic situation involved the lives of the general public, thus widely evoked a strong cognitive demand. At this time, if the information released by the authoritative department is not sufficient or timely, it cannot meet people's cognitive needs. Psychological research reveals negative bias, which means that negative information has a greater impact on people than positive information and is more durable. For example, people are very sensitive to the number of deaths in the epidemic and therefore ignore the number of cured. Therefore, when an information publisher publishes negative information, it needs to present a large amount of positive information or problem solutions at the same time, so as to alleviate the psychological impact of negative information on people. In addition, because experts have professional knowledge, and many people lack relevant knowledge, the two have different understandings of the same issue. Therefore, when experts transmit information, they need to express it as easily as possible in the language that the people can understand, so as to ensure the accuracy and effectiveness of information transmission. Loving the people around you and staying alive are more important than anything. Love is a medicine against any negative emotions. Love yourself and the people who love you.

In addition, the media must be based on facts and objective reports. They cannot selectively amplify or reduce the risks. They must allow the public to make judgments and decisions in an open and transparent information environment. Respond to the call for approval of official information release. Actively respond to the call and unified arrangements of the government and health departments. Correctly understand the information of the epidemic situation from official channels, learn to distinguish rationally, avoid the cloud of people, and be fooled by false information and produce unnecessary negative emotions.

Any violations of the law, such as raising prices, creating rumors and confusing the public, should be reported in time[7].

Interpreting fear as a challenge

According to the theory of fear coping, the root cause of fear is cognition, that is, how we evaluate the environment and ourselves. The cognitive assessment consists of two steps. The first step is the primary appraisal, which mainly assesses environmental needs. When the environmental needs are assessed as full of fear, the second step of secondary appraisal begins. The secondary assessment is mainly an assessment of personal capabilities and resources. There are four possible outcomes: if the virus is not effectively controlled and spreads, everyone can be infected, which is threatening; People and families infected with the virus have their health and life rules disrupted. This is harmful; many people have to give up planning for more than half a year of travel, or they cannot return home to reunite. With different degrees of economic losses, this is a loss. Threatening, harmful, and lossy are often our first response when faced with fear, but in fact we have a fourth option-since the epidemic has occurred, and since fear has already occurred, then we can completely treat it Seen as a challenge. For individuals, this is a test of our personal hygiene habits, which encourages us to live regularly and maintain healthy habits. For society and the country, this is a test of the health management system, risk early warning, and prevention and control capabilities. It can expose weak links and promote the improvement and improvement of institutions and systems. Such cognitive methods can effectively reduce the degree of fear.

Conclusion

Psychologists have found that long-term fear affects the functions of various biological systems such as the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis (HPA axis), the autonomic nervous system, and the immune system. Alcoholism and many other unhealthy lifestyles increase the risk of many diseases including cardiovascular diseases, digestive tract diseases, and respiratory diseases [8]. However, potential threats may or may not appear. Excessive fear of these threats often interferes with people's normal work and life, and may even cause some physical diseases. From the perspective of evolutionary psychology, fear has its positive significance. It can help humans to enter a state of stress in advance before threats appear, and defend through "fight or flight" reactions, thereby greatly increasing the probability of survival. In the fight against the new coronavirus pneumonia epidemic, moderate fear can make us alert and develop protective habits such as wearing masks and washing hands frequently, thereby reducing the risk of infection.

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