Luana Bossolo: Hi, good afternoon. My name is Luana Bossolo; I work in the APA Communications office and welcome to today's webinar on coping in the era of coronavirus. This webinar is for undergrad and graduate students to address questions you have about stress and anxiety due to sudden life changes, you're experiencing, related to COVID-19. Psychologists Dr. Lynn Bufka and Dr. Vaile Wright will respond to your questions. Doctors Bufka and Wright are experts in stress management, anxiety, and coping skills; both are on staff here at APA and you may have seen them in the news, heard them on the radio, or read their quotes in recent media coverage on COVID-19. They will respond to your questions submitted in advance as well as questions that are posted during the webinar. So, please feel free to ask questions during today's presentation using the questions box, which is above the handout section of your dashboard.

We already have a lot of questions submitted prior to the webinar, so we'll try to get through as many as possible. And a copy of the recording will be sent to all registrants along with the survey. So, please take a few moments to fill it out. Now, over to you, Dr. Bufka and Dr. Wright.

Dr. Lynn Bufka: Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you so much for joining us today. We know that this is an unprecedented time that we are in right now. Everybody is experiencing uncertainty – not really sure what to expect in the next few months, not… not to mention even just the next few days. APA is working really hard to try to address many of your concerns; you can see on the screen links to many questions about psychology and education. Today, we're really going to focus on how do you cope with what's going on? And Dr. Wright and I are more than happy to try to address some of the questions that you have and hopefully learn from you about some of the things that you're experiencing and provide some suggestions for how to move forward in a really unprecedented time. Doctor Wright?

Dr. Vaile Wright: Yeah – thanks, Lynn. So, in addition to the website, you'll also notice that in the handout section of the webinar, we also have an FAQ and some other handouts that people might find really useful. The reality is there are some really big questions right now about… about your education, your training, and what's going to happen. Like Dr. Bufka mentioned, that's not going to be the focus of this webinar. This webinar is really going to be about in this time of uncertainty, how do we deal? And so that's what our focus will be, but again, we direct you to the website and to the handouts for more focused questions about like how to handle questions around your education and training and so, Luana, we're ready for the first question.

Luana Bossolo: Okay, great. So this was submitted, how can we distinguish true facts from false regarding the virus when it's not our field?

Dr. Lynn Bufka: You know, that's a really interesting question. I think one of the benefits that we have as psychologists and psychology students is we are trained in science. We have a lot of understanding of what research is, how to understand, it how to understand basics around health care and health care information. It's one of the strengths that we have and that we can bring to this. So, we want to do a couple of things: one, look for reputable web sites and sources of information. So, the CDC, the World Health Organization are often pointed to as good sources of information, but there are other good sources as well.

And then use your science training – use your research skills to look at what's being said and try to evaluate what really is consistent with your understanding of how health operates, how research operates, how we understand the science behind these things. And when you find information that seems to be false or misleading those… that’s a good indication to not track those sources of information so much, but to really return to the ones that are providing reliable, consistent information. Certainly, Dr. Fauci from the National Institutes of Health – he has been providing major leadership in this domain and is really a trusted leader as is the CDC in this country.

Dr. Vaile Wright: I also think it's real easy to get inundated with too much information. And so one of the things we also encourage people is it's important to stay informed, particularly around local issues in your community and in your state, but put some boundaries around how much media you're taking it in general, particularly social media. It often feeds anxiety rather than reduces it and so if you know that that is something that happens for you, take a break: walk away, put the device down.

Luana Bossolo: Okay, great. Okay. So, here's another question submitted in advance: how do we continue to focus on doing well in class while so much chaos is occurring around us?

Dr. Vaile Wright: Well, I think we need to start with the premise that it might just be really hard to focus in class right now. This is a truly unprecedented time. Nobody trained us for how to take online classes or Zoom meetings during a pandemic. That's just not something I ever was what was taught or learned.

So, we all need to give ourselves a little bit of break, recognize that this is hard, and then, you know, do the best that we can to engage in good coping, good self-care so that we can keep our emotional reserves up so that we can focus as much as possible.

Dr. Lynn Bufka: One of the things about this really unprecedented time is that it's hard to know what's within our control or not. Once you get the groove of how to do school online, that's going to be something you have a little more skill with and that may be an area that may turn out to be a strength and you'll find that that will help you as you sort of deal with the ongoing changes and expectations and other parts of your life. You've been a good… you've been a student for most of your life.

And so that's something that you can turn back to as a place where you know that you have had success in the past and that as you get used to sort of new ways of doing this, you are likely to have success in the future and that's going to help you feel like you're managing your life.

Luana Bossolo: So, I'm going to take a question from one of our attendees, Alexis: how do you make sure you get all your homework done and making sure to not get sick, but still working with people in your class?

Dr. Lynn Bufka: That's an interesting question. I don't know how much of your work is happening online versus in live and in person. So, we know that the… the… if you're thinking about COVID-19 specifically, know that that's highly transmissible. We're working really hard in our social distancing practices to try to reduce that transmissibility, but to get sick can really involve a lot of things. You know, some people are more susceptible to feeling sick because of feeling overwhelmed and stressed even, right? So it may be sick with COVID-19; it may be just sick with "Wow, this is a tough time of year." So, really, have to go back to the foundation always and that means "How do I get decent sleep?" "How do I get some regular activity?" "Can I have decent nutrition and have social support?" That's your foundation for staying healthy and well. And then think about "How can I interact with my peers in order to do my school work in perhaps new ways: ways that I haven't had to do before, but in order to still advance the aims of the class?"

Dr. Vaile Wright: Yeah, that's interesting. I was thinking about myself when I was back in school and I always got sick at the end of exams – every single year – and I always knew it was because of the stress. So, I think it's important to recognize you need to take breaks. Sometimes, that can be hard when we're sitting in front of a computer all day long. I think when you're working with other classmates again, it's important to focus on what's in your control and that's your work. You can't control what your classmates are going to do and whether they're going to contribute. You can try to help them, encourage them to do it, but at the end of the day, what's in your control are your thoughts, your feelings, your behaviors, and that's where you need to keep your focus.

Luana Bossolo: This next question is from Jorge: how can I deal with the stress of taking a whole semester online without having that face-to-face interaction?

Dr. Vaile Wright: You know, I think that one of the interesting things about this experience is the ways in which our relationship with technology is obviously going to change and the ways in which we use it to communicate and to connect to other people. Dr. Bufka and I… and I have been doing a bunch of these webinars and what we really like to do is to have people turn on their cameras. And so when you're having these meetings, it may be a little uncomfortable to be on the screen – it really helps you connect. It helps to connect to see other people and who's talking, so I really encourage everybody to use that function, whether it's on your phone or whether it's on your computer to use that to help connect to other people and feel like you're not isolated and not alone. And that's both at school and at work and in your social life as well.

Dr. Lynn Bufka: Yeah, your faculty and your colleagues and your supervisors, your trainers: they're all trying to figure out how to do this. Just like Vaile and I are doing that; we work very closely on many other aspects of our work just as like Luana and the others behind the… behind the scenes with this webinar. We have found it incredibly beneficial to use video conferencing whenever possible and to turn on our cameras. It really does help us feel like we're right there together working on something, even if we are separated by actually hundreds of miles.

Luana Bossolo: All right, the next question is from Masoud – how to overcome the ambiguity? The foggy future and financial hardship is the most stressful aspect of this crisis for me and many others.

Dr. Lynn Bufka: Yeah, that's what's part of what makes it so difficult: it's… this is an invisible threat in many ways. We don't know what this virus is and what it's going to do. We don't know what's going to happen in terms of the economy long-term. There's a lot of ambiguity and uncertainty here. At this point, we have to figure out ways to sort of accommodate that in our lives as we work to try to problem-solve about the things that we can do something about. So, there's no magic answer to fix the uncertainty in the ambiguity that… and it stinks. You know, I wish I could; I wish I could get us the economy back to work, everybody working again, things the way we want it to be – but none of us have that power, particularly as we're looking at the challenges that our healthcare system is going to face.

So then we have to look at what we have some aspect over right now. You know, can we continue to work in our classes? Is there a way to manage our finances differently for some time being? To look at –there's some programs out there proposing not paying your student loans: you having some more grace with student loans. There's some programs being proposed around things like that; families may be experiencing some benefits from stimulus packaging… packages. The government is working to try to find resources for us, but we don't know exactly what's going to happen and part of our challenge is having to sit with that uncertainty as we try to figure out next steps that we can do something about in our own lives.

Dr. Vaile Wright: Yeah, I mean under the best circumstances, under normal circumstances money is stressful, right? It's the number one thing for feeling stressed about and this is anything but normal and so yes, I would expect everybody - including myself - to feel stressed about the economy and about money. And again, it's, I think, about finding ways to allow yourself to sit with that; to just know that things are going to be uncertain for a bit and, in some ways, we just have to accept it. We don't have like it. There's nothing to like about this situation at all, but if we can accept "Hey, this is my reality for a while. I'm going to be online schooling probably to the end of the year and I don't know how this is going to end up", then we can turn all our resources towards figuring out what problems can we solve and what things are in our control.

Luana Bossolo: This next question is from Margaret: historically, I have been the one to support others in times of illness and uncertainty. However during this crisis, I'm virtually paralyzed and I'm not getting my school work on done on time. My pantry is stocked and I'm ready for an emergency, but I don't feel I am handling this well. How can I stay on track and not get too wrapped up in anxiety?

Dr. Vaile Wright: Yeah, I think a lot of us went into this field because we're the helpers, right? We are the ones that people turn to in times of need and we're the ones that help people out. I would say even though it might not feel like you're handling it, you're here right now. You took an active step to come be on this webinar to learn some skills and coping so that you could then ideally transfer them into your life. That was a huge step. That doesn't sound like paralysis to me. That sounds like somebody who's recognizing that you're struggling and took an active step to try to find some resources and hopefully we can help provide those for you. I think a little bit is again about focusing on what you have. You've got… you're prepared. That's great. That's a step up on probably a lot of people and then owning that, honoring that, and then turning around and figuring out, "Okay, maybe what things can I let go?", right, because you only have so much time and energy. And then, "How can I focus and prioritize my mental health so that I can feel more in control?"

Dr. Lynn Bufka: You know… and you started off by saying you've always been the one that other people have sort of gone to for help and support. Hopefully there's some people in your life that you can go to for help and support. It doesn't… it may feel weird to be the person that others have always relied on and now you want support and you want

to ask people for support, but your network has valued you for your life – your whole life – and has been there for you. You've been there for them; they may be really happy to be able to reciprocate for you. And if they're not able to provide the level of support that you necessarily are hoping, they may be commiserating with you and saying, “Yeah, this is tough; you're not alone in this,” and sometimes just knowing you're not alone makes a huge difference.

Luana Bossolo: Okay. The next question is from Mihaela: Hi. Do you have any advice for parents which are trying to work and study at home where the kids don't want to realize that it's not a holiday and they don't want to complete their assignments?

Dr. Lynn Bufka: Yeah, this is tough. I hear this all the time from parents. I have a 20 year old so it's a different story for me, but I can certainly relate having… having parented him his whole life and understand what that's like, you know, it's part of what's going to have to happen. We don't know how long this is going to go on you're going to want to eventually figure out some sort of routine and set of expectations that's going to work for your family and hopefully you'll get a lot of reinforcement from – depending on the age of the child – the school and what their expectations are other parents in the community, people who are similar situation in your local community, but you also got to give yourself some slack here. This is not going to be easy. It's a tough transition for children. You are doing your best as a parent right now and you're trying to figure this out as you go. There is no road map for this. I think will be a little better at it in a few weeks, but for right now, we're just trying to figure out: “What does this mean? How do I do this? How do I balance all this?” So, if trying to work or do school and you've got kids at home, and they're trying to… they're expected to be doing school and things like that, talk to the people – your supervisors, your colleagues. Let them know when you're able to work and to be online, when you need to be a parent, how you can… so that you can structure your days somewhat in order to meet those needs and if there are other adults in the household, so hopefully you're working as a team to try to both do the things you need to do as adults, but also meet the needs of the children home, but there's no perfect answer right now.

Dr. Vaile Wright: Yeah, and I think, we all need to take a little perspective, too. I know it feels like this has been going on for, like, months. It's been about a week… week and a half, maybe two weeks for some of us. So, it's still really new. It's going to get better. We are going to get better at this; we are going to fall more into a routine than, I think, a scramble that we've had to do so far. So, you know, like Lynn said, I think we need to have realistic but maybe slightly relaxed expectations and to give ourselves and our kids and our partners and our friends and our professors and everybody else kind of a break.

Luana Bossolo: Okay, I'm going to go to the submitted questions. How do I help my undergrad students, especially seniors, who feel like they have lost experiences as a result of social distancing?

Dr. Vaile Wright: I mean, the reality is we have lost some of the experiences that particularly seniors were looking forward to this year, whether that's graduating or going on internships or whatever it is, that… spring break… the things that people were looking forward to have been altered. That’s just the reality of the situation and… and that’s tough and so that's going to require a little bit of grieving and a little bit of reframing how we think about celebrations and how we think about honoring the amazing work that you've done this year and how to think about, “Are there different ways that you can celebrate?” and maybe then recreate what you missed later on.

Dr. Lynn Bufka: And obviously you're not alone in this; lots of people are going through this experience, you know, and even though it may feel like this is the first time this has happened for some people, this is not. I was thinking about this: my next-door neighbor, a junior in college, had planned a break during… a trip during the winter session. Inter-session, his father became very ill with cancer and passed away. So a trip that he had spent months planning? He was no longer able to go on. So, many people have previously faced these kinds of difficulties, these great disappointments, but they need… but we have figured out how to get through it and figured out how to approach it and have experiences, new experiences. There will be opportunities in the future. We just don't know exactly when that's going to be or what it's going to look like, but we have the chance to create something different and maybe even more personal and meaningful.

Luana Bossolo: Okay, next question: during a time like this, is it okay to not feel okay and be unmotivated and how should I cope with the changes it has brought?

Dr. Lynn Bufka: Oh, absolutely it's okay to not feel okay. There… as we've said, there's… who knows how we should be feeling right now? We know that people are likely to feel boredom, frustration, anxiety, overwhelm: all of those kinds of emotions. Feel unfair like, "Why does this have to happen to me?" Lots of things – don't judge yourself for feeling that way. Acknowledge that's how you're feeling; sort of recognize that that's what's going on; and then sort of step back and think about what's happening in my life. "Is there something that I can focus on that will help me feel more engaged and motivated?" It could be that you have realized you've really not done anything very active and you need to be a little more active. Or it could be that you've been so focused on either trying to understand what COVID-19 is all about or figuring out how to do school work in an online setting that you've not really connected with people who are important to you. So, carve out a little time for that as well and then return to the things that you feel that you need to be doing in order to advance your student aspirations and where you hope to go next, but allowing yourself the… first, just experiencing the emotions and recognizing that they're real and not judging them and then once you've sort of recognize them, then it's often easier to think about, "Where do I want to go next?"

Dr. Vaile Wright: Yeah, I think the more we try to fight these negative feelings, the less successful and effective we're going to be. We can't pretend that this isn't a hard time. There might be people in your life that are; that maybe is their approach, but if that's not your approach, don't… don't judge yourself for that. Let yourself feel your feelings, even the negative ones. They serve a purpose. They remind us of the things that are important in our lives on, you know, including being able to go out and see people. I think that's something that none of us are ever going to take for granted again. And so, you know, again just like what Lynn said, acknowledge them, recognize them, try to let them go, and try to refocus on what's in your control.

Luana Bossolo: Okay, we're going to take a question from Jennifer who's on live with us: I would like to know tips for maintaining psychological wellness for students who are tested positive for COVID-19.

Dr. Lynn Bufka: That's… that's really an important question. I mean, hopefully – I don't know if Jennifer is a student herself, If she's a graduate student teaching students – where you have the opportunity to have some control over the situation for these students, let them know what kinds of allowances are going to be made: that they can be sick, sitting in their rooms, dealing with being… recovering from COVID-19 before their academic expectations will stack up on them again. You know, this is a serious illness; for people who have it - even if it doesn't require hospitalization - it's exhausting. It can really wring you out. You're in bed for quite a while and you really have to isolate. I have a friend with COVID-19 right now. She is in one room in her house while the rest of her family is around her; so she has been able to do some things, but she has been extraordinarily exhausted. So, for any student if they become sick with COVID-19, it's going to be really important for the university, the college to convey to that student that they will have time to make up work to do those things that they need to do later in the semester or extension. Hopefully, that will be part of the plan for students and, to the extent that you can help them understand that, that will take away some of the burden. And then it's just going to be a challenge for students; help them address their concerns, right?

So, I first focused on the educational concerns. I'm anticipating students will have… if students also have health concerns like, "What's going to be the long-term impact for this for me with my health-wise? What's likely to happen to me if I have this?" to help them think about what's the most realistic outcome as opposed to the most feared outcome, because the realistic outcome is something that they may feel they have more capacity to deal with and that will help them think about managing their emotion a little bit more and to the extent that you can help them develop a supportive network - even if it's a completely virtual network - will help students with this illness during the period when they're, you know, most sick and have to really be isolated and quarantined from everyone else.

Dr. Vaile Wright: Yeah, like Lynn said, I mean, isolation is obviously the number one thing that somebody needs to do if they're sick. We also know from the research that isolation has negative psychological effects. And so, I think it then becomes incumbent on us who are well to reach out to people that we know are sick, to reach out to people that we know are part of vulnerable populations. My mom, for example, is 85; she has a pre-existing lung problem, and so she's

been in self-quarantine for weeks. And so, I make sure I call her every single day. I don't wait for her to call me. It's my job to make sure that she's doing okay. I think all of us need to be taking that on and reaching out virtually to our… our loved ones.

Luana Bossolo: Okay, great. And before we go to the next question, I just want to remind all of our attendees that there is an FAQ you can download in the handout section, or you can go to the APA website to find an FAQ to get answers to your questions about your academic programs and your internships.

So, now we're going to go back to stress questions. This one is from Jenna: how can we increase our focus while doing homework assignments when we are in an area we aren't used to working in and when we are not on our regular schedule?

Dr. Lynn Bufka: Yeah, that's a really good one. I bet Vaile has some really good tips with this because she's made some significant changes in her life and how she works.

Dr. Vaile Wright: Yeah, so I work at… I work remotely about 75% of the time so, you know, you would think – or I thought at least – that switching into this mandatory telework situation would have been pretty easy for me. I actually found it really challenging. It did throw my routine off, but some of the things that I really been trying to do to get back on track is one is I have a really separate work area from where I live. Now, I have the benefit of enough space to do that, but if you can carve out a working area that is as free from distractions as possible. Not in front of your TV, absolutely not in your bedroom and on your bed if you can avoid it because you don't want to be associating work with sleep because it's going to interfere with your sleep in the long term. So, having a separate workspace.

I am also really… I would try really hard to have a routine. I try to get up at the same time and go to bed at the same time and have dedicated time to work. What I found was that I was working so much that I stopped doing the other things that help me maintain my mental health like working out and with the gym closed, it became even harder. So, what I had to do is really prioritize that space in my schedule and I've started blocking it out to make sure that I prioritize, I spend time exercising because it helps me focus. It's part of my self-care and if I don't maintain my self-care, then there's no way I'm going to be an effective worker for APA and for... for all those that we serve.

Dr. Lynn Bufka: It's been very helpful to me to be able to talk about this transition to full-time telework with somebody like Vaile who's been doing all the time. We've actually used each other to sort of problem-solve some of the challenges were facing when we're realizing we're not doing this well, sort of "What's worked for you?" So if you've got a friend, a colleague, somebody who you really work well with under other circumstances – talk with them; figure out what they're doing. Maybe they can help you identify some strategies you hadn't considered.

Luana Bossolo: All right, our next question is from Jennifer: for grad students who are doing clinical work remotely, how do we balance helping manage patients' anxiety when we're also trying to manage our own?

Dr. Lynn Bufka: There are a lot of clinicians in that situation right now and I would imagine actually that your supervisors are also struggling with that. I hope that you are able to talk about that in supervision with your supervisors. It's something as an active clinician myself, I have talked about that with somebody that I consult with. So, I'm licensed; I don't technically have supervision, but I have consultation, right, and… and how do you deal? How do you determine what's really accurate anxiety about this unprecedented situation? What anxiety that's over the top that might be a manifestation of more what we would typically call health anxiety? That's a question that I've had. So I have found consultation to be invaluable in that regard and I hope that you have access to that in the setting that you're in. And also remember, you've got 45 minutes in a session that you're with your patient or whatever the length of time is. Take the time outside of session to sort of address your own concerns in whatever way works for you so you can walk back into session and refocus on what the needs are of the patient. So, the best that you can – but that's a skill we develop as clinicians. It's not something we're necessarily good at as graduate students. May not be necessarily good at it at different points in our life as professionals, either depending on the kinds of stressors were facing. So, this is probably something that's happening to a lot of people and I would hope this is actually an area that we may want to think about how we can support grad students even more in this space.

Dr. Vaile Wright: Yeah, I mean, I think… well, I hope we never have to face on a stressor such as a pandemic again in our future. To be frank, as… as clinicians and as future clinicians, you're going to have stressors in your life that you have to figure out how to manage while you're still doing work with other patients. That could be a death in your family or the breakup of a relationship or any number of things – a health, you know… you get diagnosed with an illness and so in some ways, this is practice for what It's going to be like as you continue on in this career: how do you use consultation, which is so important, and social support and self-reflection and monitoring of your own emotions and how you're expressing them. It's an incredibly important skill that's going to serve you well as you get into this field and become licensed and continue to do this work.

Luana Bossolo: Okay. Next question is from Stephanie: trying to focus on school work is so difficult with all my kids home. Professors seem to be unsympathetic of this huge change in stress. How do we communicate with partners, children, and professors about this?

Dr. Lynn Bufka: *coughs* Excuse me. It's a good… it's… there's no perfect way for doing that. Part of its going to depend on the relationship that you have with others; bear in mind that your faculty are probably as… feeling stress as well, right? So, they may not be as open, empathic, and sympathetic as maybe they have been? So, bear that in mind. It's unfortunate if that's the case and hopefully they'll sort of get their feet back under them and get back to the place where they've been more supportive available to you, but just sort of keep in mind that right now if you're not getting what you hope for, it may be because of the things that they're dealing with as well and maybe not dealing with, but that they may get to a place where they can hear you a little bit more.

So, that's the first thing; a second thing: this is an ongoing relationship kind of question, right? You always need to be talking to your partner, the other people you live with about, "How do we manage this? What's important? What priorities have to get addressed? How are we going to do this?" There's no perfect answer; when… going back to what Vaile was saying about the self-awareness, that's important for all of us, right, to be more self-aware. It's something that helps us in our relationship. So when we're aware that we're coming from a place of high stress, we can say to the people we're talking to, "I'm really stressed out right now. I may not be saying this is clearly, but here's what I'm trying to deal with. What's happening with you?" trying to open up space to have a conversation and then hopefully getting to the place where you can say, "Here's what I really need right now. I've got an exam coming up next week. How can we do this so that I can do my exam as well as have people around me supporting the space and time that I have for that?"

Kids are… kids are going to be a challenge. It depends on the age of the kids, right? Older kids are… certainly all kids are feeling some sort of different stress anxiety about this because things aren't the same. If they're little, they're not having play dates; they're not able to run around the way that they would normally do. If they're older, they may understand some of what's happening in the news and certainly are picking up on tension anxiety that you might be experiencing. So, depending on the developmental ability of your kids and the cognitive ability of your kids, that will determine the kind of conversation you can have. You know, with… with all of them though, once you establish with all the other adults in your household sort of when you're going to particularly be working, try to set up a way to let them know. you know, if you have a space with a door you can make sure that you tell your family, "When this door is closed. I can't be interrupted. This… this is my work time. I absolutely need to have it; you need to go to the other adult in this house if you really need something during this time." And then you can also be proactive and checking in with kids when times when you have a little more space; so, if you've had to have some concentrated work for 2 or 3 hours, check in with them for 15 minutes after that. Let them know, "Okay, mom's here for you right now; dad's here for you right now. We can talk for a little bit. Now I'm going to have to go back to my space because I've got this deadline I have to meet." But help them understand in chunks of time some of what you're dealing with.

Dr. Vaile Wright: Yeah, and when you approach these conversations, you want to use the most effective communication skills that you've got in your repertoire. So, you want to be making "I" statements, not "you" statements. So, don't… you know, we don't want to be saying things like, "you never support me"; we want – because that's going to make the person defensive – we want to be saying things like, "I'm feeling unsupported right now, and I need more… I need more help to get my work done." That's going to convey both how you're feeling but it's also going to make that other person

really hear you and know where you're coming from. Timing is really important: don't wait 'til the last minute to be talking to your professors about needing more support or needing more time or needing different expectations. And… and really try to be in the best emotional place you can when you're having these conversations; if you're worked up to the point where your emotions are taking over your brain, it can be really hard to be an effective communicator. So, try to take all those into consideration can help, too.

Luana Bossolo: All right, we're going back to submitted questions. Is it really possible to build resilience in this environment if you are not resilient in the first place?

Dr. Vaile Wright: So, my short answer is yes. My longer answer is I think you're probably more resilient than you realize. I think we as humans are very resilient; resilience is about resistance – it's about resisting negative change under adversity. It's not an easy thing to do. It's something that can be built, sort of like a muscle that you develop and you work on and you practice and you make stronger. But we all have that capacity, even if we don't recognize it in our side... inside ourselves. Sometimes a great reality check is to ask a friend how they think about how you're handling something, and a lot of times they're going to say that they think you're handling it great and that they feel like they're handling it poorly and you might think that they're handling it great. You need to be having these conversations. Everybody is struggling for the most part; again, this is totally unprecedented and new, but I truly believe that as humans, we have the ability to grow and we have the ability to come out on the other side of this even more resilient. And so the next time we have to face a major stressor, we're going to have… we're going to be able to do it even better than we are right now.

Dr. Lynn Bufka: One thing that can help us when we're not sure we're very resilient, think about a challenge you faced in the past and how you've done with it. That may remind you that, "Wow, you know, I had X in my life" whether it was a relationship that changed or a class that you thought was particularly tough. You did okay with it; you're on this webinar; so clearly you came to the other side of that so you have some resilience for sure, but when we're feeling really stressed out and overwhelmed, it's hard to remember that we have that. So it... it helps to be really active and reminding ourselves of the times we've been successful and the times that we face difficult situations because that helps us to remember we have the capacity. Sometimes we have to dig a little bit for it; sometimes we have to get additional supports and think about things in new ways, but we've had the capacity in the past – we can build on that capacity for the future.

Luana Bossolo: Okay. What can we do to help our peers during this time?

Dr. Lynn Bufka: There's a lot we can do; part of it is going to be "What does it mean to help our peers", right? So, I would think the first thing we want to do is ensure that we're coming from a good place, right? That we've got our …feeling like we're coping reasonably well, that we're doing the things that keep our foundation stable. And then depending on what you're talking about in terms of your peers: if you're talking to people on a regular basis, check in with them even just about their sleep. Help them think about how can they get a better night's sleep. How can they be active when they're staying at home all the time? What are the kinds of things that help your peers to feel help… healthy and motivated and capable? Are there things that you can do for whatever community you're part of, whether it's a graduate cohort or class that you have in your undergraduate studies and you're trying to figure out to do that? Are there some things that you can do to kind of bring that peer group together? Or perhaps it's the people you live with in your residence hall and you're all missing each other: can you set up something via technology where it's just for that group, but you can share impressions of how things are going or share the kind of jokes that you love to share when you are face to face, but now you're doing it in a different medium? We're all learning some new ways of connecting. I've been practicing some things with my parents, who are in their late 70s and it's been great when we've had successes and that helps us feel like, "Okay, we've got some new tools. We can do some new things here."

Dr. Vaile Wright: Yeah, I think we really need to be looking out for our peers and our friends that we know are maybe also prone to anxiety or depression. Those are going to be people that are often less likely to reach out; their coping mechanism often is avoidance and that's not usually that effective. And so again, it's really important that we reach out, even just to check in and see how somebody's doing. And it… and I want people to remember that they don't have to

solve their peers' problems – that's not really what your role is. Your role isn't to make their life better necessarily or to fix things; it's just to let them know that you're there. Sometimes people just want to hear someone say, "I know what you're going through and I hope things get… and I know things are going to get better." Sometimes that's just what people need to hear; you Just need to hear that others are going through what you're going through and that you're not alone.

Dr. Lynn Bufka: And you know, It's funny one... one thing – I know we haven't talked about these things – but I had the experience today: I have a friend who's really bored and isolated and lonely and I know that my dad is actually really kind of bored and I suggest "Why don't you call?" and she texted me and said, "Wow, that was great. We both really needed that." So both of them are feeling kind of bored and isolated, lonely – didn't think to reach out to each other and they did and they thought it was fabulous, so, to underscore Vaile's point, reach out to people, those connections really can help.

Luana Bossolo: Speaking of loneliness, there is a question about that: how can I cope with feelings of loneliness?

Dr. Vaile Wright: Well, I love that, Lynn - you served as a matchmaker. That's like the cutest thing I've ever heard. You know, I… I think we need some important to sell… separate feeling lonely from being alone. Okay, so it's true that a lot of us – like myself: I live by myself, so I'm spending a lot of time alone because I'm social distancing – but just because I'm… just because I'm by myself doesn't mean I don't have people in my life. Okay, and it doesn't mean people have rejected me; it just means that this is our current situation – it's not going to go on forever. And so it does become an active thing that I have to do to reach out to others. I can't wait for others to just come to me. Although it's been great when people have, I have to figure out ways in which I can connect with people. So, I have a best friend; we always go to dinner about once a week -- now, we're doing that virtually. Again, like I mentioned before, I reach out to my mom on a much more regular basis than I had before. I'm making sure that I'm putting on my video for work meetings and, you know, our organization – the APA - has been doing a lot of things to try to encourage collaboration and people getting together. We have what's… I'm going to say we have a virtual happy hour in our department and that's not something I would normally join. I'm kind of introverted and I don't speak that much when I'm on it, but just being there and seeing people's faces? I'm actually finding that really helpful, whether I have a cocktail or not. So I think again, it's… you have to be active; you have to reach out to make those connections. And also reframe a little bit. Now, there's nothing wrong with having some alone time. It's a great way for you to self-reflect. Maybe you use it in a way to journal or to think about, you know, when we come out on the other side of this, who do you want to be? What do you want your relationships to look like? What do you want your place in this world to be?

Dr. Lynn Bufka: Yeah, we're trying really hard to figure out different ways of connecting because it's so easy to… I take public transit. I see the… I have my bus friends, you know; I'm not seeing them right now. So the kinds of regular routine interactions I have with people who are sort of strangers but sort of friends - I don't have that right now. I see the same two people all the time in my house. Happily, I like them: I'm married to one of them; the other one's my child, but wow, I miss going out with my friends. I was supposed to have dinner with a friend last night. We did it – we talked on the phone. I'm using the phone a lot more. We're doing a family Zoom tonight where we've got people in two, three, four, five different houses who are all going to Zoom together. You can set up a free Zoom account and we're going to see how this goes. So, we are having to be pretty active in thinking about how to do things differently. I'm hoping to play Simon Says over Skype with my godson on Saturday. He is driving his mom crazy because he can't leave his apartment. And so we're going to try to do the most active Simon Says possible to wear him out because Mom is going crazy in the apartment by herself. We'll see how it goes, but it's kind of fun to challenge myself to think about, "How can I be creative and connecting with people that I care about when I'm not able to be with them physically?"

Luana Bossolo: All right, this next question is from Erica: how do you deal with individuals who aren't adhering to the social distancing quarantine in place and guidelines in your community?

Dr. Lynn Bufka: That's an interesting one: probably depends on some of the people that… whether these are people you live with – then you have some opportunity to have some control over that, right? As a parent, I would hope that I have a little more control over my child, to tell my child what he can or cannot do -- but he's 20, he's an adult, and he's bigger

than me. So, I may not be able to physically stop him from doing things. So, it depends on what your relationship is with people. Try not to take on responsibility for people that you don't have responsibility for, but do your best to model what is appropriate. Help people understand why we are practicing this physical distancing right now and what it means. It helps people to do physical distancing -- we prefer physical distancing to social distancing as a term -- and helps people do understand and stick to physical distancing when they understand the potential for benefiting the larger community. So emphasizing that yes, there's going to be drawbacks to it, that there are some negative emotions people may be experiencing as a result of this, but the plus is we have the potential to really benefit our larger community and to really help our healthcare system because that's… our healthcare providers and workers are really going to be the ones going to be overwhelmed if COVID-19 transmission becomes really prevalent in the local community.

Dr. Vaile Wright: Yeah, I mean, I think some of the reasons why people haven't maybe been following the recommendations has to do with just the overwhelming amount of information that's out there and inconsistent messaging that I think people are seeing; it makes people doubt and you see that kind of misinformation repeated over and over again, particularly in places like social media, and then people start to have… to not base their decisions on what the scientific recommendations are. Maybe they… and I think that that it often comes from a place of fear, right? And defiance and not wanting to let go of the life that… that we're accustomed to living.

I think again, this is the time to use effective communication skills, to use your "I" statements to express your feelings, to make the argument about how this is for the community and not for them as a person, but then at the end of the day, sometimes you just got to let it go. You can't control the other person and then you've got to make decisions about how to keep you and your family safe and that might mean maintaining physical distancing from them, if you can, if you know that they're engaging in behaviors that could put you at risk.

Luana Bossolo: Okay. This next question is from Caitlin: I am a full-time student and I work in a pharmacy and I'm having trouble unwinding when I get home from work in order to do my school work. What de-stress tactics do you recommend?

Dr. Vaile Wright: Yeah, so we've mentioned a few already. I mean, certainly it's really important to maintain this foundation, right, of self-care. So, that's getting enough sleep, eating healthy, getting activity as much as you can - knowing that we have to maintain this physical distancing - and staying connected. Beyond that, a lot of these coping skills, I think, are very individualized. And so that's why it's really important to have a variety of them. So, the analogy I often use is a tool box; if I have a hammer, that's really great for hanging up a picture, but it's not going to put a chair together: I need a screwdriver for that. Coping skills are the same; you need a variety of them in case one stops working or you don't have access to it. So for me, music is a huge way that I relax. I also enjoy cooking and I enjoy meditation - things that I know will work. But I need to have a variety of them because sometimes I don't have access to music or sometimes the thing that I rely on isn't going to work that time and so I need to have another. The challenge right now is that coping skills work best when we can practice them when we're not stressed. Well, that's not our luxury here; we're stressed. So, we need to again just be really active. Be creative; figure out, "What is it that works for me?" It might not be the same thing that works for your friend or your partner or, you know, your child, but, you know, identifying the things that make you able to take a breath and just let those shoulders drop.

Dr. Lynn Bufka: Vaile's absolutely, right. The one thing that I also want to emphasize is watch out for that phone. Put it down; turn it off; walk away. It is really important to not always be inundated with - first of all - with news, right? because that may be adding to tension and anxiety. The other thing is… is the phone is very reinforcing, right? Every time it dings: "Oh, I got a message. Ooh, I got a message." Right? So, the phone may be a way that you're connecting with people, but it also is something that can be a huge distraction. We know that the… the screens don't help us wind down at night. So, this may be the time to really take control of your phone. Decide when you're going to use it and when you're not going to use it. You know, we often tell people with teenagers that it's important to have them put their phones away at night and not have them in their rooms. Maybe you need to set that up for yourself, too; phone use right now can be both… feels like, "Oh, I need it because I need to stay connected," but at the same… same time, it can really disrupt how we operate things. So, look at your relationship with your phone and see if you can use that… put

some put some boundaries around that in a way that allows you to disconnect and feel a little more stable, relaxed, in control of something when other things maybe don't feel so much in your control.

Dr. Vaile Wright: And then the other thing is that I would add on to that – which is a really incredible point and reminding me that I need to put my phone away more often – is another way to think about coping skills is that I kind of put them in three boxes. One are coping skills that rely on physicalness: so, things that make you move like dance party or baking or creating something. coping skills that relying your cognition: so, doing like puzzles or doing crosswords that kind of thing and then the third is coping skills that rely on your sensations: so that enhance your sense of smell or touch or taste like taking a hot bath, lighting a relaxing nice-smelling candle. So these are another way that you can think... think about how you might organize the coping skills that you incorporate in your life.

Luana Bossolo: Right. Okay. Our next question is from Kellen. There's so much grief and tragedy every day. What are some tips you have for building and strengthening personal resilience?

Dr. Lynn Bufka: Yeah, it's hard when we're reading the news and seeing… seeing families mourning loved ones. You know, it really touched me today reading stories about people who can't have the kind of funeral that they would like to have for a loved one and it may not be because the person died of COVID-19, but it's because we're really trying to practice physical distancing. So, part of it is don't read stuff, right? You know, decide after 6 p.m., "I'm not going to read those kinds of articles. I'm not going to follow that kind of news." Allow yourself some time to get some space from the emotions that arises for you. Because… but it's not to say that these emotions are bad or wrong or you shouldn't be having them, but you can have some capacity to decide when you want to be exposed to information that's likely to evoke those feelings and emotions and when you want to have time to separate from those feelings and emotions. We are all going to be feeling a range of emotions right now some of that we didn't expect, that we weren't anticipating but we can also decide how much of that we want to face on any given day. It's okay not to know everything that's happening. It's okay not to know how many people have gotten sick with the… been diagnosed with the virus.

Also, we can try to look for the good things, right? How many people have recovered from COVID-19? What are some benefits that are happening? For instance, the NASA satellites about air pollution: when they've had cities on lockdown and they have seen dramatic improvements in the air pollution that… in those cities. Wow, that's pretty amazing. I keep telling people around where I live that it seems like the air is cleaner. They're kind of looking at me like, "I'm not so sure that's true or not." But why wouldn't that be amazing? If we actually learn to change our behaviors in some ways to help us have better air quality because of this. Sure, there are some horrible things that are happening, but we can also find some good things. We're seeing some movement towards vaccines. We're seeing some really interesting science happening because of everything that we're learning so quickly about this virus. We will be better prepared in the future. So, you want to try to balance your positive news and… and see the… as big a picture about this as you can and also make some decisions of when you're going to pay attention to certain news and not pay attention to the news.

Dr. Vaile Wright: Yeah. I was going to say something almost exactly the same. I mean, I think one of the challenges with the news and with the media as you know, if it bleeds, it leads, right? So, while these stories about how it's some of the negative things that are happening – and they're important – and, you know, to a certain extent we need to know what they are. You don't see headlines about the positive things: about the recovery, about the acts of kindness that I think you're seeing happening particularly within communities.

And so I think one of the ways that we, in addition to either seeking out those stories and/or just limiting our exposure to the news beyond just staying informed at a basic level – finding ways to communicate… to contribute back to your community. Is that, you know… is it… I've seen lots… lots of things around listservs or apps that have identified individuals that are vulnerable, can't leave their house, and need someone to deliver groceries to them. Is that something that maybe you could do? In the service industry, there's been a lot of GoFundMe Pages or different kinds of restaurants who have set up to help those that have been laid off. Is that something you can contribute to, even if it's $10? So, thinking about ways that you can give back to your community in this hard time, I think, will also counter that bereavement, that grief and help build your resilience.

Luana Bossolo: Okay, here's a submitted question: how can I handle pre-existing depression that staying inside and isolation has only made worse and now I have lack of motivation?

Dr. Vaile Wright: Yeah, I mean one of the real challenges about situations like this is that individuals with pre-existing anxiety, depression, substance use – this can be a huge trigger for… for relapse and for… for symptoms to come back and so again, there's no easy answer to this. We can't avoid triggers, even when we have a mental illness, but knowing what they are can be helpful and if stress is one of yours – it's probably this – then again, you have to figure out ways to get active, to manage it, even if you're feeling unmotivated. And I think it's a little bit about setting expectations, right? So, maybe getting up out of bed and taking a shower is the thing that you did that morning. That's good. That's okay. That's… that's… that's a step forward. That's a goal that… that is you making a… doing something great and maybe the next day it's getting out, taking a shower, and calling a friend. So, taking small steps, building upon them to get back to where you might be feeling a little bit more emotionally stable and more able to then take even additional steps to maintain your mental health.

Dr. Lynn Bufka: For somebody who's depressed – gosh, it's so hard to reach out. That's one of the challenges with depression, right? The thing that you feel like you need the most is contact with others, yet you have the least motivation when you're feeling depressed. You have the least energy to do that kind of stuff. Can't change the situation you're in right now, but if you've had therapy before, reach out to that therapist again; find out if you're able to have a video or phone consultation with that person. if you are currently in therapy, keep it up. It's really critical to do that. Think about the things that have helped you previously in times of depression. Figure out if there's a way to do them differently. If there's somebody you really trust and who understands what you've been through, let them know that your depression feels like it's getting worse and maybe they'll be able to put a little more energy into helping you do some of those things that help you feel better, right, to reach out to you when you're having a hard time making that initial contact.

As Vaile was saying, you know, giving yourself credit for the things that you have done. For some people, even just putting, you know, setting the alarm and getting up at a regular time helps them feel like it. Also, one of the things, you know, when were depressed we have a hard time remembering the things we've done well. So, each day write down what you did; like, remind yourself: "Wow, you know, I didn't think I was going to get out of bed today and I did. You know, I managed to water the plants; the dog got a walk. I fed myself something other than popcorn and chips and salsa." You know, think about the things that you done that have been good for you and give yourself some credit for those victories. But if you're really struggling, if you're at any risk of harm to yourself, reach out for help as soon as possible. It's out there. It's going to be different because providers are doing things differently now, but call and get the help that you really need.

Luana Bossolo: Okay, we have time for two more questions. This next one is from Maricela: what are some useful ways to easily transition into the new roles that we as students have to take on while being at home, such as being an educator for a sibling or a caretaker for… for an elder we live with?

Dr. Lynn Bufka: Well, I don't know that "easy" is going to define any of it; recognizing that it's different - recognizing that it may be a new place that you're in, giving yourself some grace to not do it well immediately, or to not do anything perfectly for a while. Trying to find as much humor as you can in the situation. If you're suddenly an educator for a younger sibling, see if you can figure out what they most need help with and put your energy there. And find some ways to let them learn on their own for other things that perhaps they're able to do relatively easily. If you're providing care for the… an elder in your household, I'm sure you're doing it – hopefully, you're doing it with somebody that you really care about and you love – focus on that. Focus on that connection, the love, and think about the kinds of memories that you're making that you're going to have for the rest of your life with that person. Even if it's not what you are hoping for, that you were anticipating having, there's somebody who's going to be really grateful for the things that you're doing. Even if you don't… even if they're not showing that gratitude right now.

Dr. Vaile Wright: Yeah, that's the part. I was gonna piggyback on is, you know, if it's a transition for you. It's probably a transition for them as well. Both the student and the… and the elder being cared for and so they might be feeling

emotional and anxious and could take it out on you, which is unfortunate, but that's a reality and so not only might you not feel the gratitude from them, you might actually feel a negative emotion from them. So, then you've got… again, you need to step back. You need to walk away. You need to get yourself under control because if you let your emotions take over and you get upset, then they're going to get upset and it becomes the cycle, right? And so it really is important, like what Lynn was saying: appropriate expectations, recognizing that it's not going to go exactly like you probably want it to go and that's okay.

Luana Bossolo: So, our final question is from Jennifer: how can we learn to become comfortable with the uncertainty of this pandemic?

Dr. Vaile Wright: You never have to be comfortable with the uncertainty of this pandemic. But what you have to do is recognize that this is the reality. So, you need to accept it. Doesn't mean you have to like it, because acceptance does not equal approval. But once you can accept that this is the reality and you stop trying to fight it, then you can redirect your resources towards the things that are in your control and that is again your thoughts, your feelings, your behaviors, and how you're going to think about what this experience looks like and how you're going to get through it.

Dr. Lynn Bufka: Uncertainty is a fact of our life and… and we will always face uncertainty. It's not something that we have to like, but it's something that as we learn to be more comfortable with uncertainty and not being able to control everything and predict our future and necessarily go down exactly the perfect path we've mapped out for ourselves, we'll develop greater skills and flexibility and adaptability which will serve us well, no matter what comes at us.

Luana Bossolo: Great. Thank you so much, Dr. Wright and Dr. Bufka. For updated information, please check back frequently on the APA COVID-19 Resources page. There are FAQs that answer a lot of your questions about your academic programs and your internships. So, we encourage you to check the APA website regularly. Thanks again for joining; a recording of this webinar will be emailed to everyone who registered. And stay safe, wash your hands, and take care.