



The Pandemic and Wellness

CANA H & W Committee
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Learning Objectives

- ▣ At the conclusion of this one hour lecture, the participant will:
 - ▣ Describe the negative effects of the pandemic on SUD care and CRNA providers
 - ▣ Discuss the pandemic associated rise in SUD amongst patients and providers
 - ▣ Describe some of the positive effects of the pandemic
 - ▣ Rise in wellness focus
 - ▣ Increased wellness resources
 - ▣ Recognition of health care worker importance, contributions, and abilities

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Pandemic and SUD Care

- ❑ Isolation, loneliness, loss of income, jobs, security—leaves people feeling desperate, alone, anxious, depressed and helpless---some turned to SUD
- ❑ Putting off chronic pain procedures/surgeries = more OUD
- ❑ Alcohol use has steeply increased.
- ❑ Recovery activities impacted by public health measures---masks, isolation and social distancing.
- ❑ Persons with SUD stuck in home setting with family members who may be unsupportive or abusive---rise in domestic violence/child abuse reported.
- ❑ No in-person groups. No socializing in person---and zoom is a poor substitute. Miss human communication cues. Fatiguing effort.
- ❑ Leaves the person with SUD feeling like a social pariah, an outcast

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SUD patients needing anesthesia care in the pandemic

- ❑ Uncertainty of surgical or procedural intervention
 - Threat of being exposed to the virus when seeking healthcare
- ❑ Reports that persons with SUD are at increased risk from COVID infection
- ❑ Unfamiliar settings with unknown caregivers
- ❑ PPE---gloves, masks, face shields, gowns---present a barrier to effective communication and establishing a relationship with caregivers
- ❑ Result: overwhelmed patient with tenuous control of SUD, who may be at risk for life-threatening relapse



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Pandemic stresses for CRNA caregivers

- ❑ Uncertainty of pandemic effects on health care systems
- ❑ Some CRNAs unaffected, while others face job loss due to reduced elective surgery schedules due to resources devoted to COVID surges
- ❑ Some CRNAs sent to ICU to work with critically ill COVID patients either as an APRN, or CCRN
- ❑ Shortages of PPE
- ❑ Constant threat of COVID infection to self and family



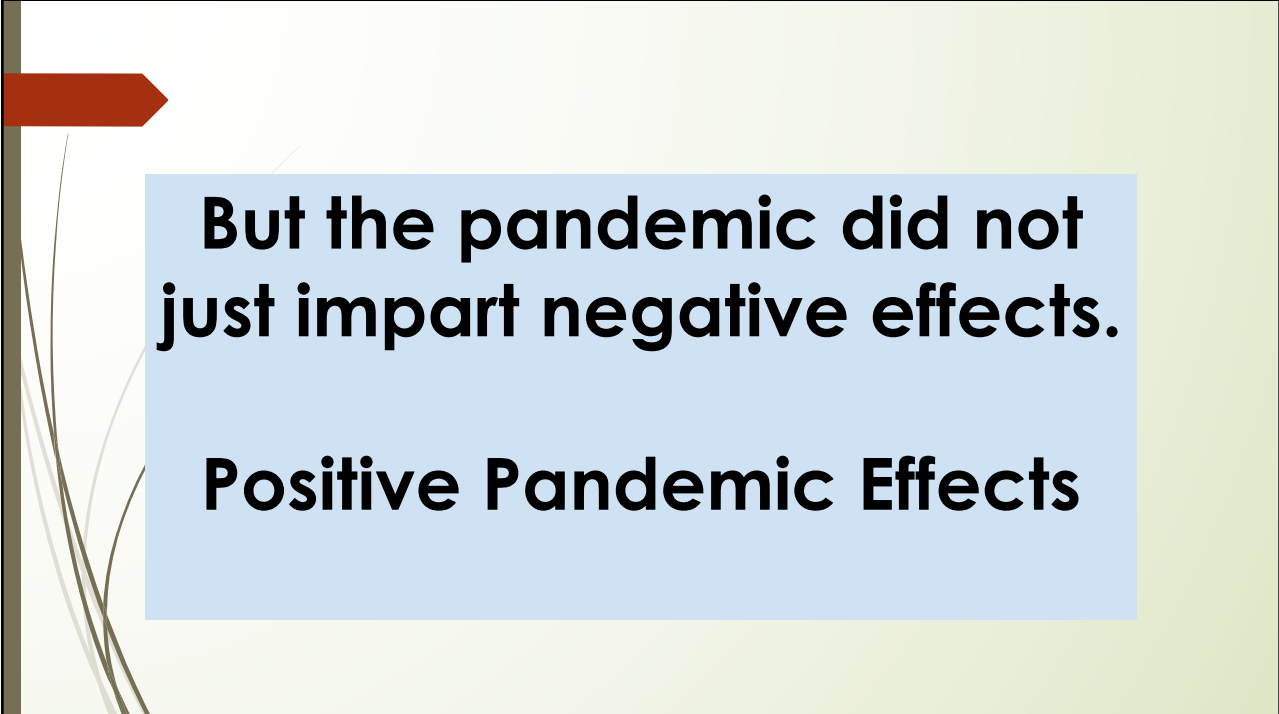
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Effects of social isolation were apparent

- ❑ social distancing recommendations naturally lead to isolation and loneliness
- ❑ Forced to deal with isolation from friends and social life
- ❑ isolation was combated by forming "bubbles", small, outside gatherings, and with the increased availability of covid tests



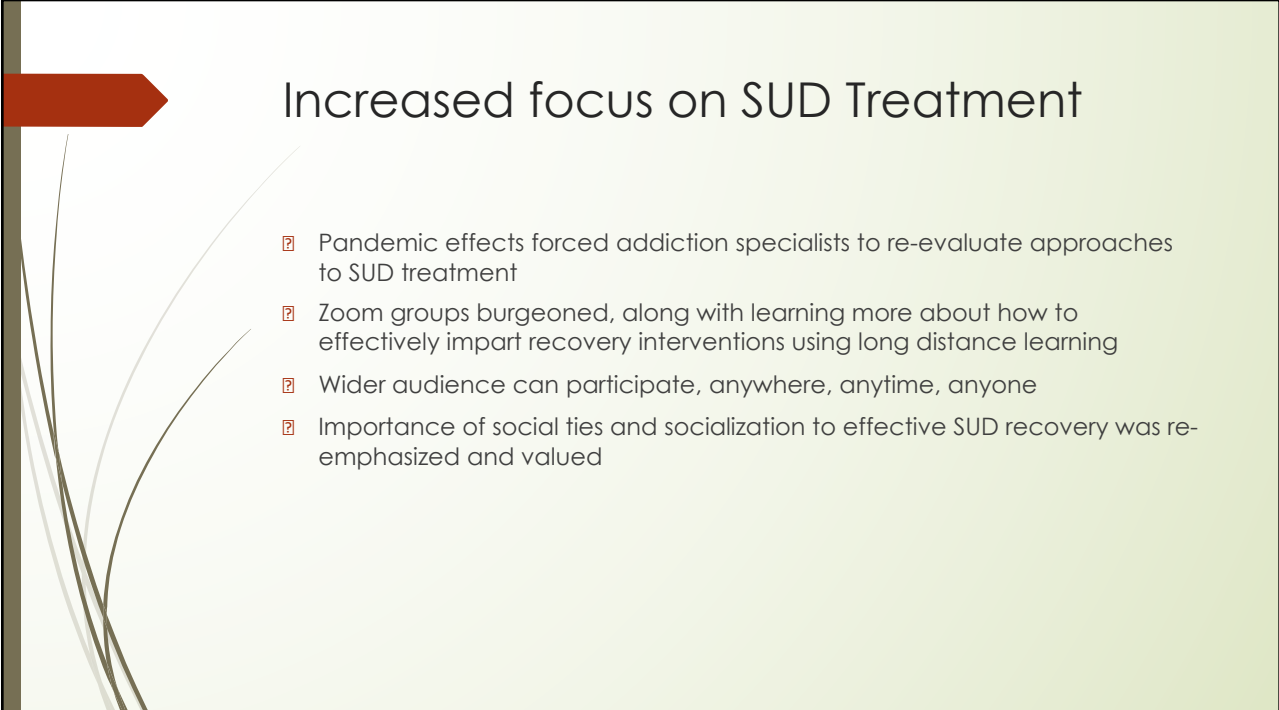
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But the pandemic did not just impart negative effects.

Positive Pandemic Effects

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Increased focus on SUD Treatment

- ▣ Pandemic effects forced addiction specialists to re-evaluate approaches to SUD treatment
- ▣ Zoom groups burgeoned, along with learning more about how to effectively impart recovery interventions using long distance learning
- ▣ Wider audience can participate, anywhere, anytime, anyone
- ▣ Importance of social ties and socialization to effective SUD recovery was re-emphasized and valued

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Frontline Nurses received recognition for their heroic efforts

- ▣ News report from Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) indicate CRNAs are among most utilized healthcare providers in the country (Jan 2021).
- ▣ Nightly salute to nurses and frontline healthcare workers
- ▣ CARES Act
- ▣ TIME magazine dedicated an issue to frontline workers and two nurses are named to the top 100 most influential people of 2020



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CRNAs and other APRNs had role expansions

- ▣ CMS temporarily suspended physician supervision requirements for CRNAs
- ▣ AANA partnership with the VA
- ▣ Nurse Practitioners granted full practice authority (Stucky, Brown & Stucky, 2021)

AANA and VA Partner to Care for Veterans During COVID-19 Pandemic



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Learning to deal with uncertainty

- ▣ Had to identify strategies to deal with not knowing what was going to happen in a completely foreign situation
- ▣ Take action of what you can control
- ▣ Gather and screen information
- ▣ learn to accept uncertainty, focus on the present

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Positive Effects of Pandemic on Personal Wellness

- ▣ We were forced to slow down, to take it easy, to figure out how we could live together more closely with family
- ▣ hidden positives of the pandemic
- ▣ Increased focus on the importance of wellness:
 - ▣ new hobbies
 - ▣ zoom parties, exercise classes, therapy more prevalent
 - ▣ increased awareness of sanitation and hygiene



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Positive Effects on SRNAs

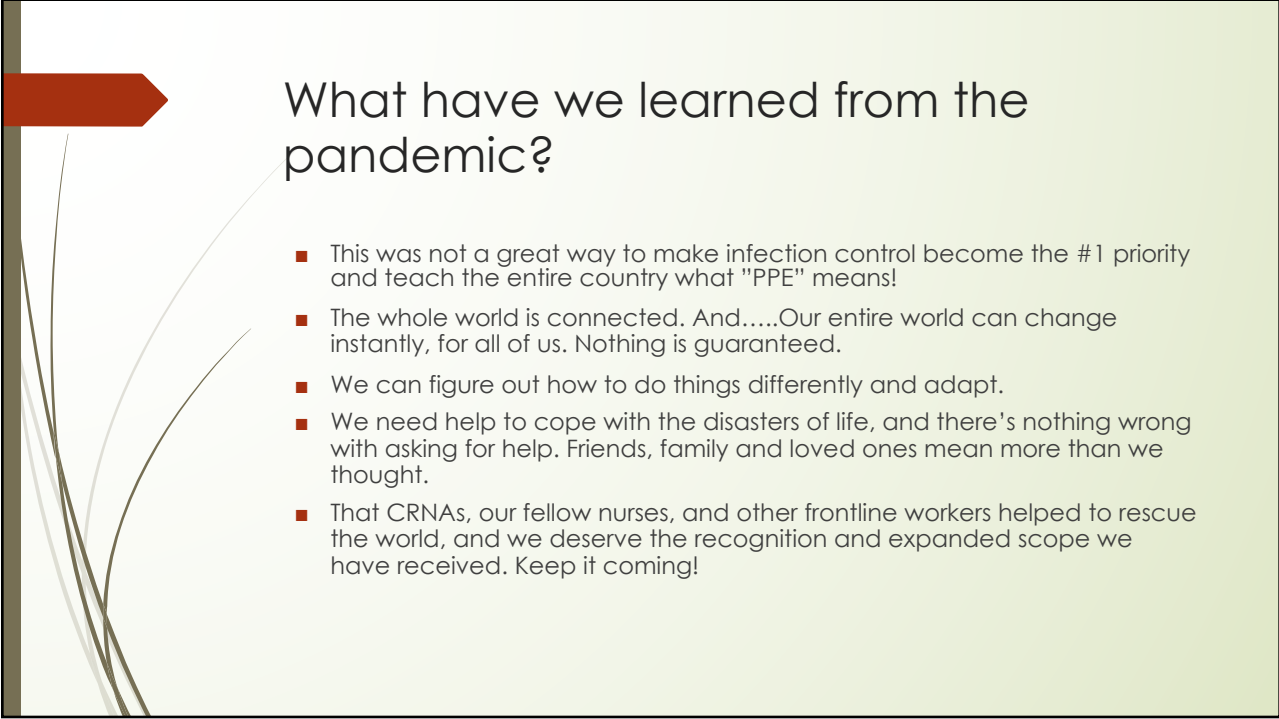
- ▣ More:
 - ▣ peer-to-peer mentoring
 - ▣ adaptive learning
 - ▣ creative structures for learning
- ▣ Monetary and time saved with online classes
- ▣ Federal student loans: suspension of loan payments, stopped collections on defaulted loans, and a 0% interest rate
- ▣ New clinical experiences
- ▣ Resilience

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SRNA Wellness at AANA.com

- -Go to <https://www.aana.com/membership/students/student-wellness>
- Many AANA resources to support SRNAs. Wellness apps. Peer to peer support session for students, May 17---register! Students sharing helpful experiences and advice.
- Pandemic has forced students to realize importance of self-care
- Asking for help is not a sign or weakness: it's a sign of "smarts"!
- SRNAs were reminded of the value of their critical care training and background by being able to help care for pandemic patients.

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What have we learned from the pandemic?

- This was not a great way to make infection control become the #1 priority and teach the entire country what "PPE" means!
- The whole world is connected. And.....Our entire world can change instantly, for all of us. Nothing is guaranteed.
- We can figure out how to do things differently and adapt.
- We need help to cope with the disasters of life, and there's nothing wrong with asking for help. Friends, family and loved ones mean more than we thought.
- That CRNAs, our fellow nurses, and other frontline workers helped to rescue the world, and we deserve the recognition and expanded scope we have received. Keep it coming!

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Conclusion

- Good luck all with coping with the current remaining pandemic
- Good luck adapting to our changed post-pandemic world as we begin to emerge from hiding.
- Take care of yourself. Ask for help if you need help.
- CRNA and SRNA-specific help is available at aana.com/wellness.
- Please visit the website and try out some of the articles and websites that offer help to us for SUD, for anxiety and depression, for advice in preventing self-harm.
- The California SPAs, Anna Mark [annalaimark@gmail.com] and Chuck Griffis [cgriffis55@gmail.com] are available to you if we can help.

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