

COVID-19 Long Haulers Syndrome A Mental-Health Crisis?

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C OVID-19 is a virus which became a world-wide issue that caused great loss of life, loss of bodily functioning, decline in commercial productivity, social isolation, and many

more hidden affects that we are increasingly learning about each day.

According to data from the United States Center for Disease Control (CDC), as of April 15 approximately 80,341,159 people were infected by COVID-19. Additionally, 984,744 people died of COVID-19 in the United States.

For those individuals who survived from the viral infection, we are learning more about a neurological phenomenon called COVID-19 Long Haulers' Syndrome. To date, approximately 25 percent of people infected with this virus report having this syndrome.

People affected with the syndrome report such symptoms as brain fog, memory difficulties, inability to retrieve information, problems with wordfinding, reading and writing difficulties, problem-solving challenges, fatigue, chronic headaches, muscle weakness, shortness of breath, heart and lung complications, limited stamina, loss of taste and smell, hair loss, dizziness just to name a few. These symptoms are concerning, especially if these they are associated with limited executive functioning.

Executive functioning is activities of critical reasoning and emotional regulation associated with the frontal lobe of the brain. Within this section of the brain, the person can read, write, think and critically problem-solve situations within his or her environment.

Additionally, the person can recall information stored in the long-term memory and be able to articulate and express information. People who have challenges with these higher-ordered processes are worried, if they will recover and revert to the same level of functioning prior to the COVID-19 infection.

At this point, the research is extremely limited. We know that people have these symptoms impacting their quality of life. We want you to know if you are experiencing these complications, you should please seek help.

Do not suffer in silence. Treatment such as cognitive remediation therapy, biofeedback, meditation, acupuncture, physical therapy, trauma-imposed therapy and cognitive behavioral therapy are methods that can assist in alleviating some of these symptoms.

One of the best ways to stay up to date on the issues that are facing people with disabilities is to follow CIDNY and other disability advocacy organizations. You can sign up for our newsletter and Action Alerts, attend our CIDNY Action Network (CAN) meetings, follow us on social media or read the news that appears here in the *Able Newspaper*. Let us make sure that you are knowledgeable and know where to find help.