

Reflection #3
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Dealing with the Fear of Being Infected With COVID – 19

The “Shake – Rattle and Roll Body Release Tool”

I remember, in the early HIV AIDS crisis, having a session in my office at St. Joseph’s Health Care Center with a very scared young man. He had been HIV positive for a few years and was asked to leave his home because of the disease and his lifestyle. He also had Kaposi’s Sarcoma which is skin lesions on his body and face. It was both painful and visually stigmatizing. During the session he became overwhelmed and his hands started to shake. As I held his hands, he unexpectedly sneezed which broke open one of the lesions in his nose and I had very small droplets of blood on my glasses and face. Afterward, very calmly, I went down to Occupational Health and they felt that it was minimal exposure - “thanks to my eyeglasses”.

Later in my office I started to shake, uncontrollable for about an hour. Many Trauma specialists report that the “Shake – Rattle and Roll body reaction” must happen for our bodies and minds to heal from traumatic events or stressful situation. I also could trust my excellent Resource team (for HIV transmission) who was there for me for years as I dealt with my fears, concerns and unconscious biases.

A So, for those working directly with People Suffering from COVID – 19:

1. **Keep talking** to your team. Make talking your self medication tool.
2. It is normal to have fears about the virus – give those fears a voice.
3. If a “shake – rattle and roll body reaction” comes on...don’t stop it.... let it come.
4. We must **share** our vulnerability – which in turns makes us stronger.
5. **Knowledge** is power which breaks down fear.
6. This is going to be a marathon – talking will be our power drink.
7. Having a darn good cry is healthy – let it come.
8. Rely on us old farts.....we might be high risk to do front line work, but we can support you.